

# **Portrait of a Resented Race**

Investigating how the Ugandan media covered the bitter sentiments against Asians expressed in April 2007 and what these sentiments say about the future of Asians in Uganda.



**Annet Kizza Rønningsbakk**

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Institute of Media and Communication

University of Oslo

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# Table of Contents

LIST OF APPENDICES .....	v
ABSTRACT .....	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	ix
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .....	xi
1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND .....	1
1.0 Introduction .....	1
1.1 Historical Background.....	2
1.2 Statement of the problem .....	6
1.3 Research questions .....	6
1.4 Justification of study .....	6
1.5 From arrival to expulsion to arrival.....	7
1.5.0 Introduction .....	7
1.5.1 How Asians came to East Africa (E.A).....	8
1.5.2 What Asians engaged in in E.A .....	8
1.5.3 The relationship of Asians with British, indigenous Africans .....	9
1.5.4 Asians contribution to E.A .....	10
1.5.5 The roots of resentment.....	11
1.5.6 How Asians were treated during the expulsion.....	13
1.5.7 Rebuilding life as refugees .....	13
1.5.8 How Asians have behaved after returning to Uganda.....	14
1.6 Structure of thesis .....	14
2 THEORETICAL APPROACHES .....	17
2.0 Introduction .....	17
2.1 Minority groups defined.....	17
2.2 A privileged minority .....	19
2.3 A vulnerable minority .....	21
2.4 Banal nationalism and banal journalism .....	22
2.4.1 Banal nationalism.....	23
2.4.2 Banal journalism .....	24

2.5 Identity construction.....	25
2.6 The “us” and “them” binary .....	28
2.7 Marginalisation.....	30
2.8 Chapter summary .....	31
3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	33
3.0 Introduction .....	33
3.1 Media landscape in Uganda .....	34
3.2. Material for the study .....	35
3.2.1 New Vision.....	35
3.2.2 Monitor.....	35
3.2.3 Why newspapers .....	36
3.2.4 Some issues to note .....	37
3.3 The scope of newspaper articles.....	37
3.4 Gate keeping.....	39
3.4.1 Hate speech .....	40
3.5 Framing .....	41
3.5.1 Operationalising Framing.....	42
3.6 Challenges faced .....	42
3.6.1 Experience with Asians.....	42
3.6.2 Accessing material .....	43
4 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS .....	45
4.0 Introduction .....	45
4.1 Overview of articles .....	45
4.1.1 Observations from Fig.1 .....	46
4.1.2 Overview of Letters.....	47
4.2 Analysis of Letters –Monitor .....	49
4.2.1 No soft beginning of the debate .....	49
4.2.2 The debate heats up .....	51
4.2.3 Was anyone watching the gate? .....	51
4.2.4 Post-riot Letters .....	52
4.2.5 A nation in repentance?.....	54
4.3 New Vision Letters.....	56
4.3.0 A smaller dose of racist sentiments.....	56

4.3.1 Reasoned Letters .....	58
4.3.2 After riots .....	60
4.4 Good gate keeping.....	61
4.4.0 New Vision.....	61
4.4.1 Monitor.....	61
4.5 Summary .....	62
5 ANALYSIS USING FRAMING .....	65
5.0 Introduction .....	65
5.2 The riot and immediate aftermath .....	66
5.2.1 Asians and their properties targeted .....	66
5.2.2 Police offer Asians protection .....	68
5.2.3 Asians go into hiding.....	69
5.2.4 Day after riots.....	71
5.3 Introduction .....	71
5.3.1 Asians are not Ugandans .....	72
5.3.2 Asians are taking Uganda's property and exploiting Ugandans .....	77
5.3.3 Asians are conniving with, favoured by the establishment. ....	81
5.3.4 Asians demand recognition .....	84
5.3.5 Asians masquerading as investors.....	86
5.3.6 Indigenous Ugandans envious of Asians .....	87
5.3.7 Exploring post expulsion tensions.....	89
6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	93
6.0 Introduction .....	93
6.1 Summary of findings and arguments .....	94
6.1.1 What the raw anger expressed in Letters says.....	94
6.1.2 Observations from Hard News, Opinions and Feature articles .....	97
6. 2 Boundaries redefined again .....	98
6.3 A privileged Minority.....	99
6.4 Recommendations .....	101
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	103
Catalogue of Articles.....	111
Pictures from riots .....	125
The Madhvani Group .....	129

The Mehta Group .....	131
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# **LIST OF APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: Catalogue of stories

Appendix 2: Pictures from riots

Appendix 3: The Madvani group

Appendix 4: The Mehta group





## ABSTRACT

In 1986, the president of Uganda Yoweri Kaguta Museveni pushed for and invited Asians back to Uganda, promising to return to them their properties that former Ugandan dictator Idi Amin had grabbed when he sent them out of the country in 1972. Since then Asians have been trickling back and many have slowly but surely restored their businesses to their former glory, thereby gaining prominence and affluence in the Ugandan society. One such business venture is the Mehta group of companies, mostly owned by the Mehta family who are Ugandans of Indian origin. In 2007, it emerged that Mehta had proposed to acquire a third of Mabira, Uganda's largest rain forest, in an attempt to expand sugar production at his Sugar corporation of Uganda limited (SCOUL) company. This move, reportedly supported by the presidency, was highly unpopular among the populace, leading to heated debates in the media and a demonstration that ended with an Indian national being flogged to death while two indigenous Ugandans also lost their lives. The media (*New Vision* and *Monitor* newspapers) coverage of this evidence of friction between indigenous Ugandans and Asians is the subject of this research.

Through this coverage, the study seeks to analyse the relationship between indigenous Ugandans and Asians, and attempts to establish whether the expressions of racism against Asians could lead to another exodus of Asians from Uganda. It employs theories on privileged minorities, banal journalism and nationalism, marginalization and the "us" "them" dichotomy.

Using theory, data and methodological triangulation, the study collected and analysed material about Asians and or Mabira forest published by *New Vision* and *Monitor* in April 2007, the period with the most intense debates on the subject, a coverage which revealed that there is indeed deep seated resentment of Asians in Uganda. It was noted that a cross section of indigenous Ugandans consider Asians as having a parasitic relationship to Uganda and there were clear signs that relations between the two groups could adversely deteriorate if the current grievances are not addressed.



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Deep appreciation to you my dear mother, Zeulia Nalongo Mangeni, the heroine I constantly look up to. I kept reasoning that if you managed to mother and raise 12 human beings on a peasant existence, I could surely complete a thesis, even with two boys pulling on my skirts. Thank you for the good example you are to me.

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Most importantly; thanks to the Lord my God, He who gives me my breath every day, He who has fathered me through life thus far.



## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

AKDN	Aga Khan Development Network
BBC	British Broadcasting Cooperation
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EA	East Africa
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NRM	National Resistance Movement
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programmes
SCOUL	Sugar Corporation of Uganda
UBoS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
IAU	Indian Association of Uganda
ABC	Audit Bureau of Circulation
NVPPCL	New Vision Printing and Publishing Company Limited
NMG	Nation Media Group
NV	New Vision



# 1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

## 1.0 Introduction

Uganda, like most countries around the world today, is a heterogeneous society. Besides the over 57<sup>1</sup> tribal groupings that traditionally call Uganda home, the country boasts of peoples from different parts of the world. According to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBoS), Uganda is also home to people from neighbouring African countries such as Rwanda, Kenya, Sudan, Burundi, Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), among others. Additionally Uganda hosts Europeans, Canadians, Americans and Asians.

According to the 2002 population census results<sup>2</sup>, Sudanese constitute the largest group of foreign residents in Uganda with a population of 163,865, followed by Rwandans and Burundians with their numbers standing at 106,206 and 87,313 respectively. Of the non-African residents, Asians are the largest group with a population of 8,818 followed by Europeans and Americans with a population of 4,174 and 1,167 respectively.

From the statistics relayed above, it is evident that Asians represent the largest group of people of non-African descent in Uganda. Asians living in Uganda include a sizable population of Indians, Pakistanis, Chinese and Lebanese.

Generally, there is a harmonious co-existence of the different groupings residing in Uganda. However, every once in a while instances of friction occur and there may be an open display of hostilities as is the case in every society. Perhaps the greatest display of hostility between indigenous Ugandans and non-Africans residing in Uganda was in 1972 when then president of Uganda Idi Amin ordered all Asians to forfeit their properties and vacate the country within 90 days.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.ubos.org/onlinefiles/uploads/ubos/census\\_tabulations/centableB10.pdf](http://www.ubos.org/onlinefiles/uploads/ubos/census_tabulations/centableB10.pdf) (accessed 18.10.10).

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.ubos.org/onlinefiles/uploads/ubos/census\\_tabulations/centableB9.pdf](http://www.ubos.org/onlinefiles/uploads/ubos/census_tabulations/centableB9.pdf) (accessed 18.10.10).



Another incident of open hostilities occurred in April 2007 when a group of indigenous Ugandans went on rampage during a demonstration and targeted Asians, leading to the death of an Indian national who was working in Uganda at the time. The demonstration was originally organised in protest of a pending government decision to give part of Uganda's largest rain forest to a sugar manufacturer, who also happens to be of Indian origin.

The demonstration was accorded extensive coverage in the media, a coverage that seemed to reveal a more rocky relationship between indigenous Ugandans and Asians than meets the eye. This study therefore explores the relationship between indigenous Ugandans and Asians as was portrayed in the coverage of the April 2007 riots and the debates about the give-away of the forest to a business group of Asian origin. To understand this subject, it is pertinent to delve into the historical circumstances that could have bearing to the place of Asians in Uganda today as discussed in the section below.

## **1.1 Historical Background**

On the fourth of August 1972<sup>3</sup>, Ugandan-Asians woke up to the announcement that they had been given 90 days to leave Uganda. Making the announcement, Ugandan dictator Idi Amin Dada claimed that he had been ordered by God in a dream to do so. At the time of this expulsion, Asians constituted the biggest number of non-indigenous Ugandans, numbering up to approximately 60,000. They also were the backbone of the economy, owning much of the manufacturing, trading and banking sectors of Uganda at the time.<sup>4</sup>

Although they were considered foreigners by indigenous Ugandans, the majority of the Asians expelled were born in Uganda and were therefore Ugandans by birth. Some of those who were not natural citizens had applied for and obtained citizenship.

Asians are said to have originally been introduced in East Africa around the 16<sup>th</sup> Century by Portuguese who imported them to work as labourers and craftsmen (Adams, 1978). These were employed in the building of Fort Jesus, the Portuguese trading port located in Kenya's

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.museumstuff.com/learn/topics/expulsion\\_of\\_Asians\\_from\\_Uganda](http://www.museumstuff.com/learn/topics/expulsion_of_Asians_from_Uganda) (accessed 18.10.10).

<sup>4</sup> [http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/august/7/newsid\\_2492000/2492333.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/august/7/newsid_2492000/2492333.stm) (accessed 18.10.10).

coastal town of Mombasa. Uganda was to see her major influx of Asians at the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century when the British colonialists embarked on building the Uganda Railway that stretched from Mombasa to Kisumu, a port city in western Kenya located on the eastern shores of Lake Victoria (Ibid).

In the six years it took to build the railway line from 1896-1901, thirty one thousand nine hundred and eighty three (31,983) workers were brought in mainly from the Punjab in what is now India and Pakistan, and from Gujarati. Of these, 2,493 would die off before the completion of the railway. They are said to have been killed by wild animals encountered in the difficult terrain, from hard working conditions, or diseases.<sup>5</sup>

After the completion of the railway line, these former labourers worked in the increasingly lucrative sector of processing local agricultural products such as cotton, coffee and tea, which were then exported for final processing in England (Twaddle, 1975). Although they were denied the right to own land, the Asians increasingly prospered in small scale manufacturing and trade as their skills were preferred to those of the locals by the British colonialists.

Michael Twaddle (1975) notes that the roots of resentment towards Asians were planted around this time when the British and Asians actively suppressed any attempts by locals to break into activities like cotton ginning that were reserved for Asians. And when the British faced one of the major riots during their days in Uganda, one of the demands was that locals be allowed to break into the cotton ginning business that was reserved for Asians (Ibid).

From 1952, the British colonialists started preparing Uganda for independence. One of the things that then Governor sir Andrew Cohen<sup>6</sup> did was to remove the barriers that prevented Africans to function as middlemen and to own agro- processing plants such as cotton ginning. This, however, does not seem to have affected the businesses of Asians who only grew in strength and riches, eventually owning most of the commercial and manufacturing sectors of the country at the time of independence in 1962<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup>See [http://www.punjabilok.com/heritage/asia\\_africa1.htm/](http://www.punjabilok.com/heritage/asia_africa1.htm/) and <http://answers.google.com/answers/threadview?id=29825> (accessed 18.10.10).

<sup>6</sup> Was a governor of Uganda from 1952 to prepare the country for independence. See <http://allafrica.com/stories/200711050085.html> (accessed 08.11. 10).

<sup>7</sup> See [http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/august/7/newsid\\_2492000/2492333.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/august/7/newsid_2492000/2492333.stm) (accessed 18.10.10).

As mentioned earlier, the Asians, more than half of whom were now Ugandans having been born there, were never really accepted as Ugandans, they were looked upon as foreigners. Because they owned much of the economy, they were very visible foreigners who became an easy target for Idi Amin. Devoid of the education relevant for running a country, especially one with an economy as fragile as Uganda's at the time, Amin resorted to the easy solution of expelling Asians, grabbing their property and handing it to his cronies. Upon expulsion, many of the Asians were granted asylum in the United Kingdom, some went to Canada, while a few returned to their countries of origin, and others dispersed into Kenya and Tanzania<sup>8</sup>. The few that remained are said to have been deported from towns to villages.

When the current government led by Yoweri Museveni took over power nearly 13 years later in 1986, Uganda's economy was in tatters following years of political turmoil and corrupt leadership. The new president was eager to perform an economic miracle. Under pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank that were initiating and sponsoring Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), President Museveni invited the Asians back, promising to return their former properties on top of compensating them<sup>9</sup>. He hoped that they could make excellent partners in the development of Uganda's business and industrial sector, thus giving the much needed boost to the country's collapsed economy (Shah, 2007).

A number of Asians took the president at his word when he promised them safety and protection of their interests. Slowly but surely, former owners of the confiscated properties have been returning to claim them. Although few have returned compared to the numbers at the time of the expulsion, their numbers have been growing over the years (Ibid). Most of their enterprises had been run down by those to whom they had been given but the old owners have now resurrected them and turned them into successful business again.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/2399549.stm> (accessed 30.09.10).

<sup>9</sup> See <http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/yasmin-alibhai-brown/racism-and-the-truth-about-the-ugandan-asians-638821.html> (accessed 30.09.10).

Things seemed to be once again looking up for the Asians living in Uganda until Mehta, a Ugandan-Asian family that has the largest shareholding in a sugar factory known as Sugar Corporation of Uganda (SCOUL), expressed desire to turn part of Mabira forest into a sugarcane plantation.

The Mehta Group was founded by Nanji Kalidas Mehta (1887 - 1969), who was born in India. He migrated to Uganda in 1900, at the age of 13 and started a series of businesses that included a tea plantation, a cotton ginnery, a sugarcane plantation and a sugar factory<sup>10</sup>. Today, the group has expanded and owns various companies in and outside Uganda, one of which is SCOUL (see appendix 4, pg.131).

Mabira is Uganda's largest natural rain forest. Covering approximately 300 square kilometres, Mabira rain forest lies on the western shores of Lake Victoria in Mukono, one of Uganda's districts. It has been protected as Mabira Forest Reserve since 1932 and is home to many endangered species of animals. The forest neighbours SCOUL.

In 2006, the Mehta Group proposed to clear a third of the forest for the expansion of sugarcane growing and applied to President Museveni to de-notify and transfer this land (*New Vision* article, 21.04.2007). Apparently the president and the cabinet supported the idea, to the horror of a section of the population who then launched a campaign to save the forest. There were long running debates in the media about this proposed giveaway of the forest, accompanied by email and SMS campaigns encouraging people to boycott sugar from SCOUL. However, the presidency seemed adamant to these cries, insisting that the expansion of the sugar company would help the economy by generating 3,500 new jobs and contributing 11.5 billion Uganda shillings to the treasury (about US\$ 4,900,000).

The president's refusal to heed to calls not to give away part of the forest led to several street demonstrations that were supposed to be peaceful but eventually turned violent against Asians because the owners of Mehta are of Indian origin. At least three people were killed during these demonstrations, one of them Indian, and several were injured. The day turned out to be disastrous for Asians in Kampala as many of them were harassed and their properties vandalised and looted. The police had to intervene to protect them from the angry rioters. I believe the targeting of Asians during the riots was an indication of racism.

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<sup>10</sup> See <http://www.mehtagroup.com/history.html#> (accessed 30.09.10).

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

The relationship between indigenous Ugandans and Asians has been rocky since the latter first arrived in Uganda, peaking with their expulsion in 1972. This thesis is premised on the assumption that the renewed hostilities expressed three decades later in 2007 could be a sign of deep-rooted resentment and racism of indigenous Ugandans who view Asians as ‘blood suckers’. The media coverage of the debate on the proposed giveaway of Mabira forest in April 2007 could foretell a possible repeat of an Asian exodus resulting from indigenous Ugandans’ hostility. The attack on the entire Asian community, instead of Mehta as an individual, could be an indication that Asians are a resented race in Uganda.

## **1.3 Research questions**

This study was guided by the following research questions:

- 1) How do indigenous Ugandans view Asians and vice versa, as played out in the media?
- 2) How did *New Vision* and *Monitor* portray Asians in the period under study?
- 3) Are there any racial issues raised? If so, how sensitive are the selected media about these?

## **1.4 Justification of study**

During the above mentioned demonstrations, the previously either non-existent or concealed negative sentiments towards Asians were exposed for all to see just because of the unpopular intentions of one Ugandan-Asian. Personally, I have been generally oblivious to Asians in Uganda as I have never directly dealt with them in my adult life. What I knew about the typical present-day Asian in Uganda was that he is generally prosperous as he always seems to be involved in lucrative businesses. But I also know from talking to my relatives or acquaintances who have been employed by Asian-owned companies that some Asian bosses are considered bad employers. Some indigenous Ugandans claim that they are segregated against in their payment and the way they are treated at work simply because they are black.

But if there has been hostility between indigenous Ugandans and Asians, it had never reared its head above the waters to be seen as it did during the Mabira demonstrations. Shortly before and after the demonstrations, there were debates about the position of the Ugandan-Asian today. For once issues of hatred and racism between the two groups were brought into the public sphere through the media and thoroughly debated. I found these debates intriguing and my interest in the history of Asians in Uganda and their relationship to indigenous Ugandans was aroused.

As I explored the historical dynamics of this relationship, I found that quite a lot has been written about the history of Asians in Uganda especially focusing on their expulsion. After wide reading, I noted that not so much has been written focusing on the period they started trickling back to Uganda. I therefore thought that a study of this subject in today's Uganda, anchored on the historical experiences, would not only produce a useful academic document, but would be an interesting venture. Focusing on the media coverage, I wanted to explore what the relationship between the Asians and indigenous Ugandans is, to see if racial issues are at play. I was interested in taking a critical look at the media coverage and debates prior to and after the demonstrations.

At the end of this project, I hoped this thesis would positively contribute to the general subject of media coverage of minorities and racial issues. But first, I present a brief look at what some of the studies done on Ugandan-Asians tell us.

## **1.5 From arrival to expulsion to arrival**

### **1.5.0 Introduction**

In this segment I attempt to establish what kind of past Asians in East Africa and particularly in Uganda have had. Kenyan novelist Ngugi wa Thiongo in his novel *Petals of Blood* once wrote that *to know where you are going, you must know where you are coming from*. Through this research I try to establish where the path of Asians in Uganda might lead. I am attempting to read the signs along the road they are traveling as portrayed in the media. The hope is that these road-marks are clear enough to indicate what the future holds for Asians in Uganda.

As Ngugi wisely noted, it may be difficult to establish the future without knowing the past. I believe the experiences of Asians in East Africa and particularly in Uganda in the past, from their arrival through the expulsion to their return to Uganda, are necessary in the attempt to

establish their future. I believe one way to find out what the experiences of Asians in the past look like, is by taking a look at what has been written about them over the years. The literature I have found that might be relevant to the understanding of the situation of Asians includes books, newspaper articles, reports and essays. From these I have established a number of themes that give an insight into their lives. These themes may answer questions as to whether Asians were always second rate citizens, what their relationship to the British and indigenous Africans was, how they were treated during the expulsion, how they have fared since then, to mention but a few.

### **1.5.1 How Asians came to East Africa (E.A)**

Although it has generally been believed that it is the British that brought Asians to East Africa especially when they needed to build the Uganda Railway, there is a school of scholars that believe Asians had found their way to East Africa long before that. Among them are Bert N. Adams and Mike Bristow (1978) who contend that “trade had flourished between India and the East African coast for centuries prior to the building of the (Uganda) railway in the late 1890s.” They also point out that many an Asian came to the region after World War II looking for business opportunities.

There seems to be no conclusive evidence regarding when and why the first Asians came to EA. The general agreement, however, is that even when Asians came of their own free will, the whole process was fuelled and largely supervised by the British imperialists (Ibid, 156).

### **1.5.2 What Asians engaged in in E.A**

Contrary to the popular belief that all Asians were *dukawallahs* (traders), a sizable number of them worked in the Ugandan civil service, while others were artisans. The Asian community was composed of diverse elements, such as the Ismailis, Hindus, and Goans, who differed from each other by religion and calling as noted by Nizar Motani’s essay on *The Ugandan Civil Service and the Asian Problem, 1894-1972* (Twaddle, 1975).

There were also professional Asians including lawyers, accountants and doctors. But the lower subset of professionals was the aforementioned; the civil servants, perhaps more appropriately called ‘government clerks’.

Most of the clerks were Goans (from the Goan region of modern day India), who had been brought in by the British to keep the wheels of colonialism moving. These civil servants were

only a small section of the Asian population and therefore their imprint on Asian-African relationships was minimal compared to that arising from the everyday contact of Asians with Africans as master-servant, teacher-student, and shopkeeper-customer. Even then, right until the expulsion, the Ugandan civil service retained its quota of Asian book-keepers (Ibid).

The presence of Asians in civil service during colonialism and after independence is the major difference between Asians in Uganda today and those prior to the expulsion. While many have returned as business owners and some as workers in these businesses, hardly any have gone back into civil service. The nearest one gets to the pre-expulsion scenario are a handful of Asians who are either in parliament or working with political parties.

Even though a number of Asians worked in civil service, the bulk of them were indeed engaged in trade. This is the group that is said to have formed the gist of the relationship between indigenous Africans and Asians, and therefore influenced the development of the relationship between the two groups (Ibid). This is explored further in section 1.5.5 below.

### **1.5.3 The relationship of Asians with British, indigenous Africans**

Once in E.A, Asians are said to largely have served the interests of the British despite gradually developing economic tentacles. Adams and Bristow (1978) believe that Asians were always second rate citizens because they lacked political power as legislation was put in place, be it immigration restrictions, land settlement restrictions, trade licenses, and work permits among others, aimed at curtailing their role in E.A. The British were mostly interested in opening up the interior for raw materials and to provide a market for British goods, and the Asians served as excellent middlemen to create the infrastructure necessary for this. But “the fact that they lacked political power meant that whenever the British and later the Africans wanted to lay claim to a portion of that infrastructure, the Asians were swept aside” (Ibid, 155).

Besides their lack of political power, another reason why Asians seemed to be stuck in the position of second rate citizens was their culture. Srilankan journalist P. K. Balachandran (1981) notes that the Asian community was generally impenetrable. Asians kept to themselves, maintaining their own culture such as a particular dress-code and marrying only among their own, which made them the eternal alien in the eyes of the indigenous population.



However, despite all these odds, the pre-and post-independence Asians in E.A are said to have done well. There was a demand for their capital and professional skills and a grudging acceptance of their apparent superior work ethic and overall reliability in some sectors. Bankers, for instance, tended to prefer Asian cashiers. Though publicly denounced as cheats and swindlers, African leaders non-the less seemed to prefer to privately give posts which involved handling money to Asians (Ibid).

This means that although Asians were second rate citizens in reference to the British, to whose terms and conditions they adhered, and to Africans who considered them a ‘closed community’, their position and skills made them indispensable. One question then is whether Asians this time around have aspired to political in addition to economic power in order to secure their future since the lack of the former partly led to their expulsion.

#### **1.5.4 Asians contribution to E.A**

The contribution of Asians to the development of the E.A economy is undisputed. These contributions ranged from trade, employment, investment, to efficient personnel for the government and private organisations, all necessary in the development process. One author sums it up when she says that the Asians “were willing to and did perform duties in E.A that the Europeans refused and the Africans were unable to do” (Alibhai-Brown, 2002).

However, Adams and Bristow (1978) contend that the Asians both exploited and developed E.A. This argument, they say, could be verified by the fact that the economic figures as they appeared at the time of expulsion clearly showed that the personal profit of Asians far exceeded their contribution. They are said to have kept for themselves the jobs that could have been given to Africans and that they made substantial profits some of which were frequently sent out of the region (Ibid).

Furthermore, a sizable section of Asians had refused to become citizens, a sign that they were not really that committed to the country (Ibid). It appears that to this group of Asians, Uganda was never home, it was a workplace, somewhere to make money to be sent back home to their countries of origin. This laid the entire community open to the charge of economic success without economic or political commitment to Uganda.

### 1.5.5 The roots of resentment

Although many Ugandan-Asians remember their expulsion from Uganda with bitterness, some have taken the view that however wrong the actions of Idi Amin were, the Asian community did not exactly endear itself to Ugandans. Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, one of the Asians who fled Uganda in 1972, observes in a newspaper article that Asians did little to share their wealth and skills and instead sent money out of Uganda illegally. She adds:

Most Asians were deeply racist, unable to imagine marrying Africans and living with them as equals. Like all racists, we fantasized that Africans wanted to possess our women. So rumours spread that hundreds of “our” girls were raped by black Ugandans, which were unsubstantiated wild allegations<sup>11</sup>.

To substantiate her claims of Asians being racist against Africans, Alibhai-Brown says her father died without speaking to her three years after she had played Juliet in a school production. The school she was attending had started admitting black children and the boy who acted as Romeo was black.

As far as Uganda’s independence from the British imperialists in 1962 is concerned, it has been argued that this was not a big deal for some Asians. It seems to have been business as usual. According to Alibhai-Brown, Asians did not much care for independence. “We did what was necessary – bribes, public demonstrations of support for this minister or that – anything that could keep us living enchanted lives in a natural paradise,” she notes (Ibid).

Specific complaints against Asians concerned the economic position of Africans vis-a-vis Asians. Approximately 90 per cent of indigenous Africans depended for their livelihood on cultivating small parcels of cotton and coffee in colonial Uganda, and life only seemed to get harder for this group as economic conditions changed (Twaddle, 1975). From the late 1920s, the acreage per capita stabilised around two to three acres, and the terms of trade were such that the real income of the farmers showed no increase. In the post-independence decade, this

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<sup>11</sup> Check <http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/yasmin-alibhai-brown/racism-and-the-truth-about-the-ugandan-asians-638821.html> (accessed 30.09.10)

actually declined as the prices the farmers received for cotton and coffee fell, while the prices of food and consumer goods rose.

In contrast, the trade flowing through Asian hands and thus their remuneration, being tied not to the average income of the farmers but to the total income of the agricultural sector, increased enormously with the expansion of acreage under export crops (Twaddle, 1975). Therefore, there developed a great inequality of income based on a racial division of labour in which Asians contributed their capital and entrepreneurship and Africans their labour.

The extent of this inequality was huge, with estimates that in the late 1960s, the 13 per cent of the population who were non-Africans received over a quarter of Uganda's monetary Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This meant that their average income was 30 times greater than that of the rest of the population. In the late 1920's, the gap was even wider, as Africans received 43 per cent of the 'national income', while Asians and Europeans received 28 per cent (Ibid).

It also did not help matters that the prosperity of Asians was not only explained by their hard work and ingeniousness. Their success was also partly attributed to their exploitation of indigenous Africans. Some Asians were accused of cheating on weights and measures, and selling adulterated products. They were said to have increased their prices for African retailers, pushed up urban rents to make it difficult for Africans to start businesses there and cut their prices to stop customers from buying at nearby African shops (Ibid).

African attitudes to work at the time did not help matters either. The general belief was that work excluded activities where one wears nice clean clothes and stays away from the burning heat of the sun. "To work is to sweat" (Ibid). Thus Asians were considered a lazy lot earning money "for doing nothing" (Ibid: 95). This lack of appreciation of the entrepreneurial function probably accounted for the high economic mortality of African traders, and helped to perpetuate the Asian dominance over trade.

From this background, resentment of Asians by indigenous Ugandans grew deeply leading to their expulsion in 1972. It is worth noting that the scenario that existed before the expulsion has changed today. Indigenous Ugandans have since acquired an appreciation of entrepreneurial skills and learned that work does not have to involve physical sweat. They have had a chance to occupy the positions that the Asians had occupied during and after

independence. This might indicate that grievances between the two groups in modern-day Uganda should be based on factors other than the ones above.

### **1.5.6 How Asians were treated during the expulsion**

Adams and Bristol (1978) established that inconvenience such as eternal queues involved with trying to get the necessary papers and processes before they could leave Uganda was a major problem for the departing Asians.

Additionally, Asians are said to have experienced property violation, with the Ugandan army and the military taking advantage of the situation to extort money and other belongings from the Asians. This process often culminated into personal harassment. However, Adams and Bristol challenge the wide spread reports that Asians were subjected to a lot of physical violence. The authors established that beatings by the army involved about one family in twenty, while killing and rape occurred in less than one of every 300 families expelled.

The practice of ‘flogging the dead’, of victimising those already in trouble, is unfortunately quite common in Uganda even today. Examples are victims of road accidents and natural disasters who in addition are often robbed of whatever property they have left, by onlookers.

### **1.5.7 Rebuilding life as refugees**

After the Asians were expelled from Uganda and as the resettlement started, many of them reportedly tried to find friends and relatives in the UK who could help them, often ending up settling in clusters in particular areas. BBC journalist Keith Somerville writes that Leicester City in UK is an example of places where Asians settled in big numbers, prompting the authorities to act. Afraid that the city could not cope with a large influx of Asians, Leicester City Council placed adverts in Ugandan newspapers urging the Asians to stay away from Leicester. However, not even this lukewarm welcome deterred them from trying to rebuild their lives. The business skills they had built up served them well in Britain, Canada and the US.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>See <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/2399549.stm> (accessed 30.09.2010)

In Britain they rebuilt their lives and their community, exhibiting a good entrepreneurial spirit and self-reliance. Their success in overcoming the catastrophic consequences of expulsion is often used by groups which oppose restrictions on immigration. These argue that the Asians proved that far from being a drain on the resources of host countries, immigrants often become creators of wealth and employment (Ibid).

### **1.5.8 How Asians have behaved after returning to Uganda**

In his article *Portable Culture and Diasporic Identities*, Hemant Shah explains that the Asians who have returned to Uganda have behaved in much the same way as they did prior to the expulsion in 1972. He also observes that despite having powerful friends in government, Asians have not made serious attempts at getting involved in the politics of Uganda, or the cultural arena. Instead, they seem happy to socially and culturally associate with fellow Asians, and their interest in the country only goes as far as making monetary profits is concerned. Shah notes that there is as good as no broadcast programming that caters for the Asian listener on the local broadcasting channels despite that they would have easy access since they have an economic stake in some channels. This state of affairs, warns Shah, might see a repeat of the 1972 situation once a leader not as favourable to Asians as the current one is takes power.

## **1.6 Structure of thesis**

In chapter one, I introduced the study and gave reasons why I focused on this topic, outlined research questions and contextualised the study from a historical perspective.

Chapter two is a presentation and discussion of theoretical principles that guide this study such as theories on privileged minorities, banal nationalism and journalism, marginalisation and the “us” vs. “them” dichotomy as useful tools in understanding the media presentation of the relationship between indigenous Ugandans and Asians.

Chapter three outlines and discusses the research methodology this thesis employed in gathering and analysing data. It also presents the scope of the study and points out the challenges faced along the way.

Chapter four is a presentation and analysis of findings from the Letters pages of *Monitor* and *New Vision* in light of the theoretical principles the thesis employs with particular focus on the gate keeping function of the media.

In chapter five, I present and analyse findings in the genres of Opinions, Features, and Hard News. These are categorised and analysed using the interpretative tools of framing.

Chapter six relates the findings and conclusions from chapter four and five to the research questions in chapter one and theoretical approaches in chapter two as a conclusion to this research.



## **2 THEORETICAL APPROACHES**

### **2.0 Introduction**

According to Silverman (2005: 380), theory is an arrangement of sets of concepts that define and explain a phenomenon. Theory has also been defined as “a set of related propositions that presents a systematic view of a phenomenon by specifying relationships among concepts” (Wimmer and Dominic: 1994, 481). This means that theory may explain what is going on in a situation or in a process under investigation. Therefore, the ultimate goal of using theory or sets of theories is explanation (Priest: 1996: 254).

The advantage of using theory, according to Bogdan and Biklen (1992), is to ensure that the data coheres and helps the researcher to avoid an aimless and unsystematic piling up of accounts gathered in the field. In other words, theories simplify what would otherwise be complex phenomena such that they are much easier to comprehend.

In setting out to research into this subject, I have been greatly inspired by the media research field of covering minorities, the “us” and “them” dichotomy in the media, identity construction and marginalisation. Furthermore, in order to understand the dynamics of the relationship between indigenous Ugandans and Asians, I have applied theories about privileged minorities, banal journalism and banal nationalism. These theories assisted me in putting this relationship into perspective.

### **2.1 Minority groups defined**

Stanislav Chernichenko (Thio, 2005: 300) noted that minority symbolises a group of people resident in a state, numerically fewer than the remaining population of that state. This could mean that they constitute less than half of its population. It could also imply that the said minority is endowed with national or ethnic, religious, linguistic and other related characteristics distinct from similar characteristics of the rest of the population. This minority tends to display the will to preserve their existence and identity. This definition covers Asians in Uganda where they are clearly numerically fewer than indigenous Ugandans and have characteristics different from the latter.



From the above general definition, one can conclude that minority groups are categories of peoples whose physical appearance, cultural characteristics or background are different from the traits of the dominant group. This can result in their being set apart for different and unequal treatment. This definition considers both race and ethnicity and in some cases gender, age, religion, disability, and sexual orientation as traits of minority groups in any given society.

The relationship and distinction between the situation of persons belonging to minorities and those of majority peoples can be identified in characteristics such as numerical inferiority, social isolation, exclusion or persistent discrimination, cultural, linguistic or religious distinctiveness and geographical concentration (Thio, 2005: 301).

As Annabelle Sreberny (2000) points out, minority groups may be escapees from military conflict, political refugees, economic migrants and economic workers. Many countries play host to these people who are caught or live between two worlds; their original home of dispersal and their new homes of arrival, neither fully at home nor totally detached (Ibid).

The existence of minority groups may sometimes cause friction with the majority in a society especially when the latter group feels 'threatened' by the former (Parker, 2006). The result is marginalisation of the minority who are sometimes treated as outsiders. In an article on religious pluralism, Parker (2006) notes that although minority groups form an important part of any pluralistic society, they endure varying degrees of marginalisation and in some cases episodes of violence.

Some of the notable religious minority groups are the Jews in European countries that practiced Catholicism or Protestantism whereas they adhere to Judaism; and Christians living in pure Moslem countries. Expounding upon the experience of Jews in Europe, Parker says that where they existed, they were expected to convert to the faith of the host country and those who resisted conversion would suffer public condemnation, libel accusations and expulsion in extreme cases. The most extreme form of attack on Jews is the Holocaust when the Nazis killed several millions in large numbers (Ibid).

In other instances, as was the case in the US, Jews faced discrimination not because they were a disadvantaged lot but because of their status. Their status as a privileged minority became the cause of their troubles (McWilliams, April 2005).

## **2.2 A privileged minority**

A dominant or privileged minority is a group that overwhelmingly wields political, economic or cultural dominance in a country or region even if they represent only a small fraction of the population. The terminology *privileged minorities* is usually used to refer to a group defined along ethnic, racial, national, religious or cultural lines and that wields an uneven amount of power (Rosenblum & Travis, 2000).

Rosenblum and Travis (2000) further point out that a minority group is not necessarily a minority because they are a smaller population than the majority. They cite the South African system of apartheid as a major indicator that a minority group may be socially and not numerically defined, since 90 per cent of South Africans are black but until the early 1990s, *they* were the minority group. Instead, the whites, who constitute only ten per cent of the population, were the dominant group. The South African white minority enjoyed the best services in the country and were the wealthiest.

Aron Raymond (1999: 206) asserts that there exists a privileged minority in every society; an elite in the broad sense, with a distinguishable governing 'position' in the narrow sense. In this respect, a privileged minority is to be found in the best positions economically or politically.

A number of minority groups wielding disproportionate representation in economically-powerful positions exist around the world, however, in some situations these groups may not have the political, social and cultural power that other dominant minorities have. Common examples of minorities that may have had economic power and influence in a society but lacked political dominance and often suffered as a result, include the South Asians in East Africa (among them Ugandan Asians), Chinese in Indonesia and Malaysia, and Jews in US or Europe and the Middle East.

In thinking about Asians in Uganda, it is difficult for me to imagine how to discuss theories about covering minorities the way they are traditionally understood. The main issue is that a lot of the literature on this particular field tends to originate from the developed world

especially North America and Europe. The typical scenario is that research is done with a news medium in a Western country as the subject of scrutiny. Such studies tend to look at how the particular medium covers a certain group of minorities that are traditionally or historically strangers to the country in question. Hence, the usual situation is that the minority being discussed is generally less powerful in that particular society than the majority.

Considering Norway for example, when we talk about minorities, some of the first categories that spring to mind are non-Western foreigners such as Africans, Asians and especially Muslims after September 11 2001. Compared to the majority who in this case are the indigenous Norwegians, these groups are often less powerful and their lot generally humble.

It is arguable that this situation, at least in the case of Norway, arises out of the fact that:

- When one moves here from a country like Uganda; where I come from; there is a sense of having to start all over again because one has to first learn Norwegian before finding any employment, especially gainful employment.
- The risk of having to depend on social welfare and not finding meaningful employment is increased if the immigrant is a refugee with no prior formal education as is often the case with refugees from rural areas in Africa and Asia. In their new country, they are expected not only to learn the new language, but also to get some sort of formal education that could then lead them to employment. This is a tall order for people that move here as adults.
- Newcomers may have had a good formal education from their country of origin, but on arrival they discover that their education is not approved in Norway. This means they have to either re-educate themselves by taking the same education all over again, or just enrol for a different course altogether.

All the above automatically put the newcomers in a subordinate position both economically and socially. The typical minority is therefore of lower social standing and has less bargaining power than the dominant. It is no surprise that the media research that is easily available is that which covers this kind of scenario; marginalised minorities. This puts my research at a loss because the minority I am investigating certainly has more money, influence, and a higher social standing on average than the typical majority in Uganda. Asians are a privileged minority in Uganda.

## 2.3 A vulnerable minority

Having argued that the Asian minority in Uganda is a privileged group, I should point out that this status does not necessarily mean they are not vulnerable. In fact it is arguable that a minority group that wields such economic influence is highly susceptible to resentment by the majority who may envy their status and prosperity.

The economic muscle of Asians in Uganda is such that they are the backbone of the economy. Asians own businesses ranging from manufacturing and processing industries to petty enterprises. A good example is two of the largest conglomerates in Uganda; the Madhvani Group and the Mehta Group. Between the two of them, they own or have a stake in 42 companies (see appendices 3 and 4). They grow and export flowers, they manufacture construction materials, and they manufacture and distribute sugar, matchboxes, sweets, soap, cookies, to mention but a few.

These business ventures naturally give their Asian owners a high profile in society, which makes them visible and consequently easy targets. This exposes them to resentment by some indigenous Ugandans who may believe it is their right to own what the Asians own, even if the latter may have built the businesses from scratch.

The facts of history cannot be denied, and these show that the Asians came to Uganda long after the indigenous peoples had settled there. According to historical facts, the first indigenous settlers migrated into present day Uganda as early as 500 B.C. Asians on the other hand first arrived in Uganda around 1844<sup>13</sup> (Twaddle, 1975). Consequently, many an indigenous Ugandan consider Asians as foreigners however much the law recognises them as Ugandans. They are outsiders as further discussed in 2.4 below under banal journalism and nationalism.

The fact that it is the current government in Uganda which invited Asians back to reclaim their properties could lead to them being viewed as favoured by government. This support may appear useful at the moment, but in some ways it portrays the Asians as privileged, making them more vulnerable and susceptible to resentment. Why? Because government leaders change their minds or may be replaced, and government systems change. Zimbabwe's

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0108066.html#axzz0z87aaNp3> (accessed 10.09.10)

Robert Mugabe demonstrated this in 2002 when he ordered white farmers to give up their land and properties to indigenous Zimbabweans in a dubious land redistribution policy.<sup>14</sup>

Raymond (1999: 206) notes that there is a need to examine the relationship between the privileged minority and the many in a community. He refers to Montesquieu's foresight when he warned of the danger for the privileged minorities when central administration falls in the hands of an unfavourable majority

In a continent where governments have been known to take drastic detrimental policies against foreigners (someone originating from another country or thought of as an outsider)<sup>15</sup> overnight, the foreigner is never really secure. And even if the indigenous peoples have considered the newcomers the "favourite child", they may not hesitate to back their governments when they suddenly turn against the foreigner.

In situations where governments may not change policies like the case in Zimbabwe, governments themselves change, when one leader is replaced by another. This may usher in a whole new way of dealing with foreigners. A case in point is Venezuela where many foreign-owned companies watched their investments, secure under previous leaderships, disappear in the name of nationalisation under Hugo Chavez.<sup>16</sup> Closer to home, Ugandan Asians flourished when Milton Obote was leader of Uganda, but a year after Idi Amin took power, they were shown the door. To some people, once a foreigner, always a foreigner. That keeps Ugandan-Asians in a perpetual state of vulnerability even if they are economically privileged.

## **2.4 Banal nationalism and banal journalism**

In this segment, I look at the terms banal nationalism and banal journalism, their origin and relevance to this research. Banal journalism and nationalism are theories that I believe can be useful in explaining the relationship between indigenous Ugandans and Asians, and how this relationship is portrayed in the media.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/2187453.stm> (accessed 10.09.10)

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.yourdictionary.com/foreigner> (accessed 10.09.10)

<sup>16</sup> [http://english.pravda.ru/world/americas/20-01-2010/111736-chavez\\_communist-0/](http://english.pravda.ru/world/americas/20-01-2010/111736-chavez_communist-0/), and <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/7397326.stm> (accessed 10.09.10)

### 2.4.1 Banal nationalism

According to the free online dictionary, the word *banal* refers to something that is common, predictable, lacking originality; something commonplace. Social Sciences scholar Michael Billig (1995: 4-8) used the term banal to try to define and explain the notion of nationalism in everyday life. Billig uses what he coined as “banal nationalism” to demystify the hitherto general understanding of nationalism as something expressed at grand occasions such as war and national celebrations, or something associated with extremism. He defines banal nationalism as the everyday representations of the nation which build an imagined sense of national solidarity and belonging amongst humans.

Billig cites examples of banal nationalism as the use of flags in everyday contexts, sporting events, national songs, symbols on money, popular expressions and turns of phrase, patriotic clubs, the use of implied togetherness in the national press; for example, the use of terms such as the prime minister, our team, and divisions into “domestic” and “international” news. These symbols are most effective because of their constant repetition.

Using Norway as an example, I believe nationalism in the traditional sense would mean the celebration of the 17 of May, Norway’s Independence Day, with all the grandeur and pomp that follows. On the other hand, banal nationalism would look more at how Norwegians are nationalistic in everyday life. This would include the hoisting of the national flag when a family member has a birthday or wearing the *bunad*, the traditional wear, at confirmation ceremonies, or eating *ribbe*<sup>17</sup>, *lutefisk*<sup>18</sup> or, *pinnekjøtt*<sup>19</sup> during the Christmas season.

Like in Norway, banal nationalism in Uganda is expressed by wearing traditional clothing such as the *kanzu*, *Suuti*, and *gomesi* at marriage ceremonies and important family occasions.

Billig further points out that although nationalism is back-grounded in everyday life, it is always ready to be mobilized in the wake of catalytic events. This is arguably what happened in the riots that turned violent against Asians in Uganda. Whereas there seemed to be harmony between indigenous Ugandans and Asians in everyday life, the threatened transfer of

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<sup>17</sup> Pork ribs

<sup>18</sup> Dried cod soaked in a lye solution before boiling to give it a gelatinous consistency

<sup>19</sup> A main course dinner dish of lamb and mutton

Mabira forest to a Ugandan Asian became the catalytic event that mobilised banal nationalism and turned it into frenzied nationalism.

Billig further notes that not only is a nation an imagined community of people, it is also the imagination of these people about their homeland;

The imagining of a 'country' involves the imagining of a bounded totality beyond immediate experience of place. [...] The citizens of the nation state might themselves have only visited a small part of the national territory. They can even be tourists in parts of 'their' own land; yet it is still 'their land'" (Billig: 1995, 4-8)

It is not usual for Ugandans to visit forests, unless they live within their vicinity and therefore use them as a source of items necessary for everyday life such as firewood, medicinal herbs, and foods. As I was growing up, my travel experiences only involved visiting my parents in the country-side, or relatives in other towns on big holidays such as the Christmas season. I knew there were game parks, forests and water bodies, but I never visited these. I imagine this is the case for many average Ugandans, yet this may not make them feel any less nationalistic about these natural resources. I believe that most of the people in the crowds that rioted on 12 April 2007 had never been to Mabira. Yet, as Billig says, they thought of the forest as part of their land.

#### **2.4.2 Banal journalism**

The notion of banal nationalism is the springboard of the theory of banal journalism. Media scholar Prasun Sonwalkar (2005) coined the phrase banal journalism to refer to commonplace journalism. It refers to journalism that is predictable; a journalism that is lacking in originality.

Banal journalism states that what passes off as mainstream journalism, a journalism that claims it caters for the needs of the entire society (politically correct journalism), is just 'business as usual'. It is as much steeped in the practices of the past where the media catered mostly to the needs of the dominant sections of society at the expense of the minority.

Sonwalkar (2005: 262) further contends that the media today "purports to adhere to the ideals of modernity but in practice diurnally wallows in being politically incorrect." My understanding of the ideals of modernity in reference to media is that all groups in a society that is said to be modern are somehow given space in the media and no one is marginalised.

That should mean that all strata of society are represented in the media and media workers are sensitive about language in respect to the differences in such a society. However, Sonwalkar argues that that is seldom the case.

He additionally notes that the debate around news production has long moved from the determinism phase, which was suggestive of news production taking on a mechanical process. This meant that if events were in line with certain news values they stood a good chance of becoming news. This process depicted journalists as passive recipients of external event-stimuli. The general agreement in later research has been that news is a ‘human construction’ (Hall, 1982 cited in Sonwalkar, 2005); “journalists can scarcely remain untouched by the social and cultural environment in which they function (Ibid).”

In the context of this research, this means it would be unrealistic to imagine that the media would be devoid of racist sentiments against Asians if the Ugandan society, within which they operate, is steeped in these attitudes.

A quick reading of the newspaper articles and television stories during and after the riot that saw the death of an Indian and two Ugandans, easily reveals that two groups of people are struggling with identity and acceptance. The Asians in Uganda are suddenly forced to rethink their identity; are they Ugandans? If they are, how should they then interpret the hostility that they are receiving from “fellow” Ugandans? Many are being forced to defend their *Ugandanness* in the wake of the riots. On the other hand, many indigenous Ugandans have to face the reality that they actually could adhere to racist thinking. In the ensuing exchange in the news, one can tell it is a nation struggling to come to terms with who they are. It is the eternal but ever changing ideology of national identity.

## **2.5 Identity construction**

The ideology of identity construction has been variously discussed by media and social researchers, among them Finnish media researcher Inka Moring (2001). Quoting various studies, Moring contends that “national identity can be understood as the construction of collective memories of the nation and the people”. She continues that this identity is often represented as a historical narrative with answers to questions such as; who are we? Where do we come from? These questions may not be asked verbatim in the stories surrounding the



Mabira debate, but a reading between the lines reveals that they are being asked, and that Uganda is a nation at crossroads.

Simon Cottle (2000) elaborates the phenomenon of identity construction by explaining that as people negotiate their identity, terms like 'race' and 'ethnicity' come to the fore front. He notes that the term race developed as a means to differentiate social groups as biologically discrete subspecies marked out by physical appearance, innate intelligence and other natural dispositions. The notions of race and ethnicity are attributed to attempts to measure, categorise and rank people in a hierarchy of superiority and inferiority.

Cottle further notes that notions of race variously provide a means of thinking some of the most fundamental categories, distinctions and discriminatory processes that humanity has produced. Within these we conduct our lives and construct a sense of who we are, where we belong and where we want to be (2000: 1).

According to the free online dictionary, racism can be defined in varying ways such as the belief that race accounts for differences in human character or ability and that a particular race is superior to others. This can lead to abusive or aggressive behaviour towards members of another race on the basis of such a belief. But the definition most applicable to the kind of racism referred to in *Monitor* and *New Vision* in reference to the treatment of Asians is that it is discrimination or prejudice based on race.

Traces of racism are common in public language and discourse especially in reference to potential immigrants, migrant workers, refugees, asylum seekers, as well as ethnic minorities within the territorial confines of a nation. These may be portrayed or viewed as outsiders who do not belong to the traditional way of life in the given society (Barker 1981; Solomos 1986, 1989; Murray 1986; van Dijk 1991; cited in Cottle, 2000).

Such racist meanings are embedded within and are reproduced through the discourses, language, narratives and images of media representations (Cottle, 2000: 5). Racism assumes different forms which are produced through the different state, institutional (such as the media) and everyday practices. Media representations are shaped by a number of factors such as;

- Journalist and proprietor prejudice where some journalists and news proprietors can harbour racist views and sentiments (Hollingworth 1990; cited in Cottle, 2000). Much

of what is published therefore can tend to depend on the personal views of proprietors, senior editors and ordinary journalists.

- The ethnic composition of journalists can influence media output. If journalists come from a dominant ethnic group in a country, they may often share similar values which undoubtedly influence the sensibilities and knowledge base informing journalist output. This should mean that since most journalists in Uganda are indigenous Ugandans, they may be expected to have fairly homogeneous views about Asians in Uganda.
- News organisations are in business to make profits and all compete for readers and audiences. Surviving in the market place means seeking maximum readers and the maximum receipts from advertisers (Ibid, 19). In this context, news is produced just like any other commodity for the largest possible group of consumers. This would mean that since indigenous Ugandans constitute the biggest segment of potential readers by virtue of their large numbers compared to Asians, the media output is tailored to attract them.
- News values have been noted to help select, order and prioritise the production of news representations (Galtung and Ruge, 1965). In the context of ethnic minority reporting, it is perhaps unsurprising that the news often forefronts images of ethnic minorities in terms of conflict, drama, controversy, violence and deviance (Cottle, 1991; cited in Cottle, 2000).

Marie Gillespie (2000) says media plays a big role in the construction of national identities. Referring to Benedict Anderson's (1983) work on imagined communities, Gillespie points out that the print media was instrumental in the forging of the imagined community of the nation. The widespread dissemination of newspapers led to a heightened awareness of the steady, anonymous and simultaneous experience of communities of readers (Anderson, 1983).

Thus, the nation of simultaneity was crucial to the construction of national consciousness in its early modern forms as it is today. The earliest newspapers connected dispersed people to particular discourses of a nation and the mass ritual and ceremony of reading the newspaper continues to contribute to the construction of ideas of national community (Ibid, page 167).

In the case of Uganda, this may entail that the media coverage of the controversy surrounding Mabira forest could help foster the building of bridges between Asians and indigenous Ugandans or encourage a sharper demarcation of imagined territory, even as the country stands at crossroads in the wake of the conflict.

## **2.6 The “us” and “them” binary**

Contemplations about the identity of a particular people are often closely linked to the social-cultural binary of “us” and “them”. The definition of the majority that historically occupy a particular geographical location, (for example indigenous Ugandans), inevitably puts themselves in the “us” position. On the other hand the historical or ethnic minority (Asians) or people who migrate to the country in later years are thus relegated to the position of “them”.

Sonwalkar (2004) suggests that one of the best ways to understand banal journalism is to look at the “us” and “them” concept. In agreement with Gillespie, Sonwalkar contends that although the “us” and “them” notions may seem simplistic, in reality they represent a deep rooted complex structure of values, beliefs, themes and prejudices prevailing in a socio-cultural environment. These manifest in the media as banal journalism:

Banal journalism is predicted on this key binary of ‘us’ and ‘them’. The newspaper you read or the television bulletins you watch play similar roles in Billig’s surreptitious, limpid flag: “the metonymic image of banal nationalism is not a flag which is being consciously waved with fervent passion; it is the flag hanging unnoticed on the public building” (Billig 1995:8).

The newspaper may be lying carelessly on the drawing table, the bulletin may be on air as you go about your chores but you know what that will always present is of interest to you, to us. Banal journalism flags the ‘us; daily in news columns, and TV content, without most of us realising that there is a vast reality out there that is rarely considered newsworthy, even if it involves much violence and terrorism (Sonwalkar, 2004).

In media texts of yesteryears, years when it was less important to be politically correct, it was much easier to find instances of “us” and “them”. The situation is not supposed to be so any longer. In societies across the world, the struggle has been going on for decades for the recognition and granting of the rights of minorities. Media houses therefore, along with society at large, should have become more sensitive and adapted to today’s political

correctness (Sonwalkar, 2004). That means that the media content should serve and reflect the entire strata of society. This notwithstanding, it's still common to encounter text written and situations represented with the general framing of "us" and "them".

In analysing the "us" and "them" binary in the Ugandan news coverage of this issue, I imagine the sense of "us" "them" should intensify when accusations start flying across racial divides. Admittedly, there can be an existence of this phenomenon in society even in times of peace, but the demarcation lines may in such times be more blurred. These lines sharpen in times when either of the groups feels threatened in some way by the other.

In the case of Uganda, there may have been some bitterness at the fact that some Asians seem to turn whatever they touch into gold, in comparison to indigenous Ugandans. But what happens when the indigenous peoples suddenly feel threatened by the 'foreigners'? Elliott (1986) expounds on this thus:

People only display attitudes of us due to an acquired sense of *we-ness* determined largely by a sense of *they-ness* in relation to others [...] Group attachment [...] imports loyalty and allegiance to *us* in the face of outsiders. (Elliott, 1986: 8-9)

A more general view comes from Barbara Hooper:

In times of social crisis, when centers and peripheries will not hold, collective and individual anxiety rise and the politics of difference become especially significant. The instability of the borders heightens and the concern with either their transgression or maintenance is magnified. When borders are crossed, disturbed, contested, and so become a threat to order, hegemonic power acts to reinforce them, the boundaries around territory, nation, ethnicity, race, gender, sex, class, erotic practice are trotted out and vigorously disciplined. (Hooper, 1994:80)

Ugandans, like any regular nation, do not always agree with each other. It is a country with over forty ethnic groups locally known as tribes, speaking just as many languages. Some of those tribes are headed by cultural heads bearing different titles, among them kings<sup>20</sup>. In fact, the disagreements have been so bad at times that the Baganda, the biggest tribe and kingdom and which traditionally occupied the central region where the capital Kampala lies, have at

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<sup>20</sup> See [http://www.ubos.org/onlinefiles/uploads/ubos/census\\_tabulations/centableB10.pdf](http://www.ubos.org/onlinefiles/uploads/ubos/census_tabulations/centableB10.pdf) (accessed 18.10.10)

times threatened to throw the other tribes off “their” land, saying they have abused their hospitality. However, when a national issue like Mabira forest is concerned, where Asians may be perceive Asians as the enemy, Ugandans have been known to put aside their differences and formed a marriage of convenience.

This is a clear example of what Sonwalkar, Billig and Moring have termed shifting notions of “us” and “them” I was looking for these instances in the media texts that I handled. Did the threat of a Ugandan-Asian encroaching on Mabira forest drive the indigenous population into a more visible sense of *we-ness*? I also wanted to find out if the media coverage revealed that Asians consider themselves as being in their own class, therefore considering indigenous Ugandans as “them” and they as the “we”.

## **2.7 Marginalisation**

Marginalisation can be defined as the social process of becoming or being made marginal (especially as a group within the larger society). It further means to relegate or confine to the fringes, out of the mainstream; make seem unimportant<sup>21</sup>

Just like Moring’s (2001) reflections on identity formation, Cottle (2000) notes that questions of ethnicity and race are about the drawing and redrawing of boundaries, adding that boundaries define the borders of nations and territories as well as the imaginations of minds and communities. These boundaries then can serve to include some, exclude others and to condition social relations and the formation of identities.

As time goes by, boundaries can become part and parcel of the structures and institutions of societies. Once institutionalised, boundaries are taken for granted and too often become exclusionary barriers, leading to the formation of a marginalised group. In such ways, the marginalised and the excluded can become misrecognised as ‘Other’ (Cottle, 2000:2).

Once embedded in society, marginalisation can then manifest itself in the media since the media is part of society. Marginalisation in the media can be a result of focusing on certain issues or groups in society. By so doing, the issues or groups that do exist in that society but that are ignored in the media become marginalised (Eide, 2004). Marginalisation can be an

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<sup>21</sup> The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition

expression of the “us” “them” binary in the sense that it is often the dominant whose issues and voices are heard in the media. This is at the expense of the “them” whose issues and voices are seldom represented, thus they are marginalised. In the case of the Mabira forest debates, it is not only a question of whether the views of Asians are visible at all, it is also how these and the views of the majority indigenous Ugandans about Asians are presented.

## **2.8 Chapter summary**

In this chapter I have laid out the theoretical principles that guide this research. These theoretical approaches are the threshold from which the media coverage of the riots of April 2007, and the ensuing racist sentiments against Asians in Uganda, is being analysed. The chapter discusses the concept of privileged minorities, with the conclusion that Asians in Uganda fall under this category, but that this status does not necessarily exempt them from being targeted. It further presents and discusses Micheal Billig’s banal nationalism, leading into Prasun Sonwalkar’s thesis of banal journalism and marginalisation.

It then considers how these three concepts often manifest in the “us” and “them” binary in media content which basically shows that news organisations mainly tend to cater to the needs of the dominant segments of society. Finally the chapter attempts to explain identity construction, and how the borders between different groups are never permanent but shift according to existing social, political and economic conditions.



## 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methods that this study employed to collect and analyse data. It justifies the choice of the different methods and how they were selected.

Silverman (2005) defines methodology as the choices a researcher makes about cases to study, techniques of data gathering and forms of data analysis in planning and executing a research study. Research methodology in mass communication is a structured set of procedures and instruments by which empirical phenomena are registered and interpreted (Jensen et al 1991).

This study employs a combination of research methods to attempt to map out the relationship between indigenous Ugandans and Asians as portrayed in the *Monitor* and *New Vision* in the selected period of study. Using a combination of research methods is what scholars usually refer to as triangulation (Patton, 1990: 187, Bryman, 2004:275). Wimmer and Dominic note that triangulation employs both qualitative and quantitative methods to fully understand a research problem at hand (1994:47). The reason why triangulation is encouraged is to strengthen the credibility of the research findings by applying more than one source of evidence to arrive at answers to the research problem. This is what Patton (1990:188) refers to as cross-data validity.

Four basic types of triangulation have been put forward by Denzin (1978) and these include:

- a) Investigator triangulation, which he refers to the use of various researchers to collect and analyse data.
- b) Methodological triangulation, defined as the use of several methods to study a research problem.
- c) Data triangulation or the use of a variety of data sources in a research study.
- d) Theoretical triangulation, by which he meant the use of a variety of perspectives to interpret data (cited in Patton, 1990: 187; Bryman 2004:275).
- e) Of the above methods, data triangulation, theory and methodological triangulation are applied in this research. I use data triangulation, which means that I used a variety of



sources (collecting data from *New Vision* and *Monitor*); theory triangulation where I used theories discussed in chapter three to analyse the data I collected. I further apply methodological triangulation by using gate keeping and framing to categorise and analyse data, as further discussed in 3.4 and 3.5.

My point of departure is an assumption that racist sentiments exist, and hostilities between indigenous Ugandans and Asians lay just below the surface. This study is an attempt to establish how indigenous Ugandans and Asians perceive each other as portrayed in the media. To do this, I have analysed content of *New Vision* and *Monitor* published in April 2007, when the riots that exposed racist sentiments against Asians were covered.

Since the issue under study is a national one, I selected Letters, Opinions, Features and Hard News stories from *New Vision* and *Monitor*, the two leading daily newspapers that enjoy national coverage in Uganda. I use a capital letter whenever referring to these genres in this thesis for easy recognition. These genres of media content are discussed further in 3.3. From the two newspapers, I have looked at all the content published in the month of April that had anything to do with Mabira forest proposed give-away and Asians.

Due to time and space limitations, it would be impossible to carry out an in-depth analysis of all the Hard News stories, Opinions, and Features published in the whole month of April. I have therefore randomly selected a sample of stories out of the 287 articles I have collected. When it comes to Letters, since these are a form of direct contact between the editor and readers, it became imperative to analyse all of those published in the period under study whose content had anything to do with Mabira forest and or Asians.

### **3.1 Media landscape in Uganda**

The media in Uganda experienced dramatic growth following the liberalisation of the economy in 1993 which saw an explosion of private enterprise media (Ogundimu, 1996; Tabaire, 2007). With that policy in place, Uganda's media landscape became diverse in nature, content and reach. By the end of 2010, Uganda had more than 120 licenced radio

stations, 10 licenced television (TV) stations<sup>22</sup> and more than 10 weekly, bi-weekly and daily newspapers.

## **3.2. Material for the study**

### **3.2.1 New Vision**

The *New Vision* is a government owned daily newspaper that is said to have a 60 per cent share of the daily newspaper consumption in Uganda. Figures from the British owned Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC) indicate that as of June 2008, *New Vision*'s circulation figures stood at an average of 34,368 for the daily paper, and 31,533 for the Sunday edition. The paper comes in versions of *New Vision* (weekdays), *Saturday Vision* and *Sunday Vision*. All three versions are hereafter referred to as *New Vision* (NV).

The paper, produced by the New Vision Printing & Publishing Company Limited (NVPPCL), started business in March 1986 after the current government, then called the National Resistance Movement (NRM), took power in a coup d' état. The paper's initial line of business was the production of an English language newspaper "*The New Vision*". As of November 2010 it was producing several local language newspapers and magazines in addition. It also ran an affiliate radio station and a television station. It succeeded previous government-owned newspapers (Voice of Uganda, Uganda Times) that had collapsed for a variety of reasons.

At its inauguration, the government granted the new newspaper financial autonomy and some measure of editorial independence, which saw *New Vision* management set what they have called "an objective and progressive political line, supportive of the Movement (the ruling party) ideals, but critical of failings"<sup>23</sup> as the basis of its editorial philosophy.

### **3.2.2 Monitor**

The other newspaper selected for this study is *Daily Monitor*, an independent daily that also sells well in Uganda. As of June 2008, its daily circulation figures stood at 22,157, according to figures from ABC. As of November 2010, the paper comes in the versions of *Daily*

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<sup>22</sup> See [www.ucc.co.ug/RadioAndTVBroadcastingStations.pdf](http://www.ucc.co.ug/RadioAndTVBroadcastingStations.pdf), (accessed 09.11.10).

<sup>23</sup> See <http://www.newvision.co.ug/V/>, (accessed 09.11.10).

*Monitor*, *Saturday Monitor* and *Sunday Monitor*. For the purpose of the study, reference to the paper hereafter is *Monitor* (M).

Monitor was established in 1992 as an independent newspaper, first as a weekly, then a bi-weekly, before it eventually became a daily newspaper. It was initially set up and owned by a group of ambitious veteran journalists who were hungry to create a voice that could not be curtailed by the establishment in the coverage of news and issues. This they did until 2005 when financial hardships saw the majority shares being sold to Nation Media Group (NMG).

The NMG is an originally Kenyan company, which has spread its tentacles around East Africa, owning majority shares in media houses around the region. Together with Nation Media Group in the ownership of *Monitor* are individual shareholders. They believe that “the paper’s private ownership guarantees the independence of its editors and journalists, free from the influence of government, shareholders or any political allegiance.”<sup>24</sup> The paper enjoys wide circulation and is generally relied upon to give the angles that the government owned *New Vision* would be afraid to venture into. The company also runs a radio station originally called Monitor FM, now renamed KFM, and publishes a business directory known as Monitor Business Directory.

### **3.2.3 Why newspapers**

The decision to use newspapers for this study over radio or TV media was majorly based on access. It was easier to access content relevant for the study from *New Vision* and *Monitor* than getting TV or radio recordings. To start with, the two newspapers under study have online archives and libraries with media material organised according to dates of publication. This made it easy to analyse the newspapers.

In addition, the newspapers enjoy countrywide readership in Uganda and also circulate across neighbouring Kenya and Tanzania. This means that media material in the two papers would fairly be representative of the entire country.

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<sup>24</sup> [http://www.monitor.co.ug/artman/publish/about\\_us/index.shtml](http://www.monitor.co.ug/artman/publish/about_us/index.shtml), (accessed 09. 11.10).

### 3.2.4 Some issues to note

The main issue with using *Monitor* as a source of research is that it may not be as independent as it claims to be since its ownership changed in 2005. The majority shareholder of Nation Media Group, who subsequently became the majority shareholder of *Monitor*, is the Aga Khan, spiritual leader of the biggest branch of the Ismaili shia Muslims. Besides *Monitor*, the establishment of the Aga Khan has and is aspiring for other business interests in Uganda. These are approved and regulated by government bodies, such as the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Investment, Uganda Investment Authority and Uganda Bureau of Standards, among others. Thus, like any smart businessman operating in the economic and political chaos and corruption existent in many an African country, I would imagine that the Aga Khan foundation seeks to be on good terms with the government in Uganda. This has allegedly led to either the firing or the transfer of journalists and officials in *Monitor* that government deemed to be too critical of their doings.<sup>25</sup> It could therefore be argued that the new ownership makes *Monitor* less reliable as a source of independent news output.

That situation notwithstanding, it is important to note that even with the new ownership that is more favourable to government than the original owners of *Monitor*, the paper would probably be more trustworthy to handle controversial issues with balance than their counterparts *New Vision*. Therefore, in the absence of any other credible independent daily newspaper, *Monitor* does serve as a good alternative.

### 3.3 The scope of newspaper articles

From both *New Vision* and *Monitor*, I selected articles published in April 2007. I chose the month of April because this is when the riots and the most intense debates about the place of Asians in Uganda took place. The main riot that saw the death of three people occurred on April 12. I found that the days leading up to this riot and the weeks shortly after were witness to a number of debates and stories that were interesting to analyse and that were central to this thesis.

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<sup>25</sup> <http://www.mail-archive.com/ugandanet@kym.net/msg24756.html>, (accessed 09.11.10)

The genres I have used in this analysis are Letters, Opinions, Features and Hard-News stories. Letters to the Editor can be defined as letters sent to a publication about issues of concern.<sup>26</sup> These Letters are written by readers of a newspaper, magazine, or other source, on topics relevant to the publication's audience. They address diverse topics, from commentary on local, national and international issues. Sometimes, letters are responses to opinions and stories previously published.<sup>27</sup> A detailed discussion on the rationale for using Letters is in Chapter 4 section 1.1.

Hard News is fast-paced news that usually appears on the front page of newspapers. Hard News is mostly about new occurrences or events that are reported immediately in the newspapers. They are stories about current events in a newspaper.<sup>28</sup>

Features in a newspaper can be referred to as soft news. A feature story is an essay written by a journalist or news reporter on varied issues of human interest. Topics of feature articles are sometimes derived from topics covered in news pages.<sup>29</sup> An example from this research is that after the news broke that part of Mabira forest could be given away (Hard News), subsequent detailed accounts were done about the forest entailing its history, what kind of trees and animals inhabit it and its importance to the climate and environment.

Opinions in a newspaper are articles written about the author's point of view on a certain topic or subject. These articles appear on specific pages in a newspaper and are clearly marked as opinions.<sup>30</sup>

To find answers to my research questions, framing analysis and gate keeping have been used as interpretative tools to analyse articles from the above genres published shortly before and after the riots. Frame analysis and gate keeping have guided me in the attempt to arrive at meaningful conclusions regarding how the relationship between the indigenous Ugandans and Asians was covered in the media.

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<sup>26</sup> [http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Letters\\_to\\_the\\_editor](http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Letters_to_the_editor) (accessed 09.11.10)

<sup>27</sup> [uwp.duke.edu/uploads/assets/letter\\_to\\_editor.pdf](http://uwp.duke.edu/uploads/assets/letter_to_editor.pdf) (accessed 09.11.10)

<sup>28</sup> <http://mediacareers.about.com/od/glossary/g/HardNews.htm> (accessed 09-11-10)

<sup>29</sup> [www.ehow.com%2Fhow\\_1000603\\_Write-feature-story.html](http://www.ehow.com%2Fhow_1000603_Write-feature-story.html) (accessed 09-11-10)

<sup>30</sup> [http://answers.ask.com/Education/Schools/how\\_to\\_write\\_an\\_opinion\\_paper](http://answers.ask.com/Education/Schools/how_to_write_an_opinion_paper) (accessed 10-11-10)

### 3.4 Gate keeping

In journalism, gate keeping is the process through which ideas and information are filtered for publication. It is defined as the internal decision making process of relaying or withholding information from the media to the masses. Gate keeping occurs at all levels of the media structure - from a reporter deciding which sources are chosen to include in a story to editors deciding which stories are printed, or even covered.<sup>31</sup>

Pamela J. Shoemaker and Tim P. Vos in their book, *The Gate Keeping Theory* (2008), note that news work – the process of news gathering, news writing and dissemination, has come under a lot of scrutiny especially because people's sense of reality is influenced by what gets into the news and what is left out. They further point out that gate keeping involves more than decisions about what to write about or what images to capture. It begins when ideas, events or people first come to the attention of a news worker. Virtually all news work involves gate keeping; what to write, what to include or leave out, how to shape a topic, among others (Shoemaker & Vos, 2008). Gate keepers are able to control the public's knowledge of the actual events by letting some stories pass through the system while keeping others out.<sup>32</sup>

Editors and other people involved in the process of news selection are the gate keepers. In most cases, these have the responsibility to give the sense of direction at editorial meetings where decisions are made on what stories to cover and what to leave out. At the end of the day, editors receive the stories from reporters, deciding which ones will be used and which ones are killed. For the stories selected for publication, editors decide what content should be kept and what should be thrown away. This role has consequences which media researchers Clint C. Wilson and Felix Gutierrez (2004) appropriately sum up:

The process of filtering out huge volumes of information while allowing only a few items to reach the audience is an act that by itself adds credence and importance (consequence) to the surviving events and issues [...] The perspective of American values, attitudes, and ambitions brought

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<sup>31</sup> Don W. Stacks, Michael Brian Salwen (1996) *An Integrated Approach to Communication Theory and Research*

<sup>32</sup><http://www.utwente.nl/cw/theorieenoverzicht/Theory%20clusters/Media,%20Culture%20and%20Society/gatekeeping.doc/> accessed on 20.09.2010

to society have largely been those of gate keepers and others with access to the media. (Wilson & Gutierrez, 2004)

These arguments have been a useful guideline in determining the thinking of the news workers of *New Vision* and *Monitor*. The content that was chosen to see the light of day, and which stories were prioritised in the wake of the debates surrounding Asians and Mabira forest, informed this study about the point of view of these media houses when it comes to Asians in Uganda.

The gate keeping function of the media was used to analyse attitudes of indigenous Ugandans towards and about Asians and vice versa. To do this effectively, I selected and studied all the Letters that readers and contributors wrote about Asians in the one month period under study as indicated in 3.3 above. This acted as the entry point and the introduction to the entire analysis.

### **3.4.1 Hate speech**

Since letters are oftentimes about burning current issue, they can tend to be emotional and not well reflected. Letters are sometimes said to rant and or rave and when the issue under discussion has to do with the actions of someone or a group of people, this ranting and raving can easily tend towards hate speech, thereby introducing the dilemma of freedom of expression versus hate speech.

Hate speech can be defined as speech intended to encourage hatred against individuals or groups based on race, religion, gender, sexual preference, place of national origin, or other improper classification. It is often intended to degrade, intimidate, or incite violence or prejudicial action. The term covers written as well as oral communication.<sup>33</sup>

It is often argued that freedom of expression, the right to express oneself, may have limitations imposed upon it when it has implications for the rights of some people. The concept of hate speech therefore is quite central in analysing the Letters that were allowed through the gate. I contend that the choice to publish these Letters in the form that they appeared is a reflection on what kind of gatekeeping *New Vision* and *Monitor* exercised.

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<sup>33</sup> See <http://jilliancyork.com/2009/04/24/what-is-hate-speech/> (accessed 10.11.2010)

### 3.5 Framing

Framing has been defined in a number of ways but the definition most relevant to this study is that it is “the process of culling a few elements of perceived reality and assembling a narrative that highlights connections among them to promote a particular interpretation” (Entman, 2007).

In agreement with Entman, Jim A. Kuypers views framing as a process whereby communicators, consciously or unconsciously, act to construct a point of view that encourages the facts of a given situation to be interpreted by others in a particular manner. Frames are often found within a narrative account of an issue or event, and are generally the central organising idea (2009).

On his part, Erving Goffman (1974) used the term ‘frames’ to mean “schemata of interpretation” that allow individuals or groups to locate, perceive, identify, and label events and occurrences; thus rendering meaning, organizing experiences, and guiding actions. Gameson & Modigliani (1989:3) concur with this view of framing when they contend that frames are interpretative packages that give meaning to an issue.

Kuypers further elaborates that framing analysis is a rhetoric perspective that begins by looking for themes that persist across time in a text and then determining how those themes are framed. He contends that work begins with the assumption that frames are powerful rhetorical entities that “induce us to filter our perceptions of the world in particular ways, essentially making some aspects of our multi-dimensional reality more noticeable than other aspects. They operate by making some information more salient than other information. . . .” (Ibid). Defining news as a frame and a window to the world, media scholar Gaye Tuchman writes that this in itself presented a series of problems:

The view through a window depends upon whether the window is large or small, has many panes or few, whether the glass is opaque or clear, whether the window faces a street or backyard. The unfolding scene also depends upon where one stands, far or near, craning one’s neck to the side, or gazing straight ahead, eyes parallel to the wall in which the window is encased. (Tuchman, 1980:1)

It was my belief that both the kinds of frames used in the headlines of stories and the contents themselves could reveal a lot about attitudes of indigenous Ugandans towards Asians and vice



versa. These frames gave me an insight into the attitudes of the media houses and their sources. This has been a pointer to how some indigenous Ugandans and Asians view the conflict at hand.

### **3.5.1 Operationalising Framing**

Analysing the Letters in the two newspapers (chapter four) was an entry point into the issue. It was meant to be introductory to a more in-depth analysis of the relationship between indigenous Ugandans and Asians as portrayed in the genres of Features, Opinions and Hard News covered in chapter five. To carry out this in-depth analysis, I operationalised framing as an interpretative tool and applied the journalistic tools of framing news.

These framing tools include choosing the news angle, selecting sources, formulating the headline of the story, summing up the main point of the story and choosing the right picture. Using the questions raised by Jamieson and Campbell about how to assess a story using frames, I considered whether headlines were just that or preferatory statements by the reporter, what expectations the introductions created, how a different introduction could have re-framed the story, and if there is a summary statement, what interpretation it imposed on the report (Ibid: 115).

I wanted to find out if the way Asians were covered in this period reflected some of the usual pitfalls that media houses at times/in conflict situations are prone to such as hate speech, lack of balance, partiality among others, by the frames they use.

## **3.6 Challenges faced**

### **3.6.1 Experience with Asians**

Being an indigenous Ugandan myself, I have had difficulty in attempting to detach myself from my own prejudices about Asians since I grew up in the very same environment where these prejudices were fostered. I spent much of my childhood in Soroti, a district located in Eastern Uganda. This town had a sizable number of Asians, and looking back now, I think this is when my opinions of Asians were first formed. From my recollection, most Asians in Soroti were wealthier than average. They held lavish colourful parties on family and religious celebrations. Indians especially went around the neighbourhood on religious holidays handing out cookies and cakes, which as a child in an average Ugandan home, I found heavenly. These cakes were exotic, expensive and unattainable for me. Maybe there were some poor Asians in

Soroti, but I never saw any. All the Asians I encountered lived lavish lives in huge gated homes. My conclusion then was that all Asians were rich.

When I moved to Uganda's capital Kampala, I never encountered Asians on a day to day basis. This I believe is because Asians in Kampala tend to stay in the city centre, while I stayed in the suburbs. My associations with Asians were therefore mostly on the level of going to Asian-owned shops for my groceries.

As an adult and a journalist in Kampala, I mostly experienced Asians as the owners of both big (for example hotel chains, manufacturing) and petty (shop keepers) businesses. Still, I never came across a poor Asian.

The only Asian I thought was unfortunate was a mad man who used to walk up and down a certain street in Kampala. I remember thinking, as I watched him go back and forth, that how sad it was to go mad in a foreign country. This means that I considered the man a foreigner just because he looked Asian. He could have been Ugandan, for all I know. This goes to show that I, like many Ugandans, have at some point shared the view that all Asians are not Ugandan.

I have heard now and again that Asian bosses mistreat their indigenous Ugandan employees, and that is what I believed. So bad was my prejudice that I dreaded ever ending up as an employee of any Asian.

I have been made more aware of these prejudices as work on this thesis progressed. This background could have affected my impartiality in analysing attitudes towards Asians but I hope that the academic guidelines used in this research helped me detach myself in order to produce a balanced report on Asians in Uganda.

### **3.6.2 Accessing material**

Analysing content from both *New Vision* and *Monitor* required that I access either the hard copies of the newspapers that were published in April 2007 from the respective libraries or the online archives of the same. However, I encountered some challenges in accessing the material relevant for the study. A major challenge had to do with photocopying all the hard copy content about Mabira forest giveaway as this turned out to be a costly and time consuming exercise. Worse still, I often encountered that pages with important information were missing in some issues. The situation was made difficult since *Monitor* erases its online

archives quite often. Therefore, even obtaining material published in 2007 from the publication's website turned out to be more difficult than it needed to be.

Furthermore, I was unable to access the hard copies of *New Vision* from their library; I was instead referred to the online archives. Even though accessing *New Vision* online archives was easier than obtaining material from *Monitor* online archives, it was still difficult to find articles in the variety that was required for this research.

To solve these access challenges, I decided to combine all the material that I could obtain from hard copies with online articles. I felt it was important to get hard copies of *New Vision*, even if their online archives were quite substantial. I found that hard copies tended to contain a wider variety of media material than the online versions. Since I could not get the hard copies from the *New Vision* library, I photocopied whatever material of *New Vision* was available in the *Monitor* library.

## 4 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

### 4.0 Introduction

In this chapter I present and discuss a table showing the number of stories that appear in the different genres of Letters, Opinions, Features and Hard News. These were the articles published about the debate concerning the relationship between Asians and indigenous Ugandans in the period that this thesis is studying, which is from the first to the thirtieth of April 2007.

Thereafter the chapter focuses on the presentation and analysis of Letters. This is done for two reasons;

1. To measure the temperature of the readership: Letters are a temperature gauge of the populace since it is communication between the editor and his readers. I believe one of the easiest ways to try and figure out how Ugandans and Asians feel about each other is to analyse what the ordinary reader has written through the Letters. If we think of newspaper content as a window to the world, what kind of window are these contributors seeing the conflict through? This would help show whether tendencies of “us” confronting “them” exist in the public discourse.
2. To gauge the role of the selected media houses: Considering media workers as gatekeepers, I have attempted to study what they have published and what could have been left out. This has guided me in making conclusions as to whether there are instances of banal journalism expressed in the “us” “them” binary, marginalisation, hate speech and identity construction.

### 4.1 Overview of articles

**Fig1. Table showing numbers of articles published in April 2007 (N = 287)**

Genre	Monitor	New Vision
Letters	133	14

Opinions	25	18
Features	14	7
Hard News	38	38
Total	210	77

#### 4.1.1 Observations from Fig.1

1. *Monitor* has an overwhelming coverage of the issue. It ran a total of 210 articles compared to *New Vision* which published 77 articles. *New Vision* records 14 Letters, while I counted 133 Letters in *Monitor*. When it comes to Opinions, *Monitor* features 28, compared to *New Vision*'s 15. As far as Feature articles are concerned, *Monitor* carried 14, while *New Vision* ran 7 stories. And finally, both newspapers carried 38 Hard News stories each.
2. The biggest difference in coverage is with Letters as noted above, with *New Vision* carrying only 14 Letters compared to *Monitor*'s 133. There are three possible explanations to this pattern:
  - a) One explanation of the big difference is that *Monitor* vigorously engaged readers in this period. The newspaper actively crusaded for the presidency to drop the proposed give away of the forest land, at the same time urging the general public to boycott sugar manufactured by SCOUT. *New vision* was not as vigorous on these fronts.
  - b) During this period, *Monitor* ran an SMS feedback segment on the Letters' page, meaning that a lot more people were able to write to the editor. The SMS feedback section carries responses to a question formulated by *Monitor* about a current issue where readers are encouraged to send in an SMS with their opinion. In the weeks leading up to the riots, the question was "what should be done to save Mabira forest?", while the question after the riots was "who takes the blame for save Mabira demo rioting?" Most of the Letters that have been included in this count are picked from the SMS feedback segment on the

Letters pages. *New Vision* does not run a similar segment, which partly explains the apparent lack of readers' engagement on the issue.

- c) My final observation from table 1 is that the small number of articles in *New Vision* (77) compared to *Monitor* (210) could be explained by the fact that the issue directly involved government and the presidency since he is the one who was willing to sign the forest away. Since the government is the majority shareholder in *New Vision*, I imagine the paper was more careful about criticising the hand that feeds it hence it played it safe by carrying only a few articles.

#### 4.1.2 Overview of Letters

**Fig2. Table showing the breakdown of Letters published in *Monitor***

Support		Neutral/Appeal/ Regret	Blame			Threat	
Govt	Mehta/ Asians	26	Govt	Mehta	Other	Govt	Mehta
1	1		54	23	11	2	15

**Fig3. Table showing breakdown of Letters published in *New Vision***

Support		Neutral/Appeal/Regret	Blame			Threat	
Govt	Mehta/Asians	5	Govt	Mehta	Other	Govt	Mehta
-	-		6	3	-	-	-

Govt= Government

The tables in Fig. 2 and 3 show the breakdown of Letters published in both *Monitor* and *New Vision* about Mabira forest giveaway and the subsequent demonstrations against it.

The Letters published in *Monitor* were of two types: general Letters sent to the editor through regular mail/email hereafter referred to as Letters (L) and Letters sent to the editor through Short Messaging hereafter referred to as SMS Letters (SL). The Letters (L) amounted to 30 while the SMS Letters totalled 103. Early in the month of April Letters about Mabira forest had mostly to do with readers wondering why the forest must be given to Mehta.

The Letters published before April 12 were basically condemning Mehta and the government proposal to giveaway the forest. The Letters ranged from calls for demonstrations against the giveaway to appeals to Mehta and/or government to consider other options, or threatening violence against Asians.

The period leading up to April 12 is when *Monitor* ran a question on what should be done to save the forest, under its SMS feedback section. Responses to this question were varied. Readers went as far as wondering why the government was so determined to go against the wishes of majority Ugandans. Others opted to boycott Mehta products to teach the owners a lesson. Some of the responses were an attack on Mehta, the government or the Asian community.

The theme running through all the responses was that giving the forest away for sugarcane growing was a wrong move. Letters directly attacking or threatening are categorised as ‘Threat’ in Figure 1 and 2. While *New Vision* ran no Letters threatening or attacking the government and Mehta/Asians, *Monitor* published two Letters threatening the government and 15 threatening Mehta and or the Asian community.

After 12 April, the day of demonstrations, there were some Letters that were sympathetic to Asians after they had been targeted in the riot. In some of these, readers regretted racist attacks on Asians. These Letters are categorised as Neutral/Appeal or Regret Letters. *Monitor* published 26 while *New Vision* published five such Letters.

Other contributors blamed the organisers of the demonstration for the chaos that led to the victimisation of Asians, while some Letters rebuked the police for failing to prevent the chaos. In both Figure 2 and 3, these are categorised as ‘Other’. *Monitor* published 11 of these Letters. Most Letters blamed both Mehta and government, saying their refusal to heed to pleas

that the forest be spared led to desperation in the populace, hence the violence. A few Letters blamed the violence on Asians, who they accused of attempting to take Uganda's property. Such Letters are categorized as 'Blame' in Figure 2 and 3. *Monitor* published 54 Letters blaming the government and 23 blaming Mehta/Asians for the proposal to give away the forest and the subsequent violence during a demonstration to save the forest. *New Vision* on the other hand published six Letters blaming the government and three blaming Mehta and or Asians.

A few Letters published on the same issue were in support of either the government or Mehta. In both Figure 2 and 3, these are categorised as 'Support' Letters. While *Monitor* published two Letters in support of the government and Mehta for the proposal to giveaway of Mabira forest, *New Vision* ran none.

## **4.2 Analysis of Letters –Monitor**

The key questions here are: What has been allowed through the gate? How does it reflect on Asians and attitudes towards Asians and vice versa? What was published that could have been left out due to incitement to hateful actions?

Prior to the riot of April 12, the genres of Hard News, Opinion and Feature reports about the giving away of Mabira forest had only a few references to Asians and traces of racism were subtle. Strong sentiments against Asians as a race are more evident in the readers' Letters.

### **4.2.1 No soft beginning of the debate**

News about the proposal by government to give a third of Mabira forest to Mehta's SCOUTS had slowly been seeping through the media sieve in early 2007, with the details emerging in April. When it became clear as to what was going on, the general public started expressing their sentiments through the Letters pages. Below is a sample of Letters that were published before the debate of the give- away became heated, and it gives a glimpse of how some indigenous Ugandans felt about the issue.

My observation is that a cross-section of indigenous Ugandans immediately bracketed themselves off as "us" and relegated anything Asian to "them". The term "us" is variously represented in terminology such as *we*, *Uganda* and *Ugandans*, while "them" is represented as *they*, *their*, *Indian community*, *that Indian subcontinent*, among others.



In a Letter titled “Mabira Forest, why must it be given to Mehta?” (L, 01.04.07, M), the contents of the brief Letter re-echo the heading, with the conclusion being “long live Uganda, short live SCOUL.” While another Letter concludes with the words “it is high time we saw who will stand up for Ugandans”, (L, 01.04.07, M).

It is my argument that whereas the words Uganda and Ugandans do not necessarily mean that Asians are excluded; in these instances they are statements of exclusion because if these contributors had wanted to be inclusive, the words could have been replaced by a more neutral term such as the nation. Choosing this kind of frame could evoke sentiments of extreme nationalism that often excludes the party that is deemed as foreign.

Such sentiments continue in another Letter whose first line reads “the request for Mabira forest land by the Mehta group to grow more sugarcane is a scheme to fleece Ugandans”, concluding with; “when the forests are over, will they resort to exporting Ugandans as slaves?” (L, 01.04.07, M). Once again, one could conclude that the term Ugandans is used innocently, but looking at it in light of *they* exporting *Ugandans*, there is a clear indication of the lines being drawn between *they* and indigenous Ugandans (us).

Similarly, the conclusion to another input is; “let the Mehtas take their scheme to that eastern sub-continent” (SL, 01.04.07, M). Telling someone whose roots are in India that they should take *their* scheme to *that Indian subcontinent* is no longer an attack on their business (SCOUL); it has crossed that line and become an attack on their ethnicity. Not only is it an attack on their ethnicity, referring to India as ‘that’ is an indication of disgust and demeaning of India as a nation. Though indirect, it comes across as a form of hate speech since it ridicules and undermines India and clearly hints at the deportation of Indians.

While another contributor writes in part, “the public reaction could have far reaching consequences for the entire Indian community. Take up the alternative offers or...” (SL,2.04.07, M). Finally, an outright reference to “them” (the Indian community) which directly separates “them” from “us”. The writer seems to have such a deep hatred of Indians that he concludes with a threat. When someone tells you to take up the alternative offer or else..., immediately after saying that the Indian community will suffer consequences, they are directly threatening you. This can be said to be a form of accumulation marginalisation, where the media makes the actions of one to represent all (Eide, 2004). Only one man, Mehta is proposing to take part of Mabira. But suddenly, the entire Indian community could face

consequences, meaning that this writer interprets Mehta's actions to be those of the Indian community.

#### **4.2.2 The debate heats up**

As the debate about the forest heats up and it becomes apparent that neither Mehta nor the Ugandan government is backing down, racist sentiments take on an even bolder tone. One reader declares in part that; "To save Mabira forest, let us ask Mehta whether he knows a man called Amin" (SL, 02.04.07, M). This is a threat telling Mehta that unless he backs down, Asians will be chased from Uganda again, as was the case under Dictator Idi Amin in 1973.

Stronger sentiments are expressed a few days later on April 5 where one Letter reads; "If Mehta and group insist on killing Mabira, let us handle them first. It is self-defence since killing forests in Uganda equals killing Ugandans" (SL, 05.04.07, M). This kind of content could be interpreted as a direct declaration of war against 'Mehta and group'. What does the word group mean in this context? As far as we know, it is only Mehta and the government of Uganda that are in cahoots to do away with the forest. But why didn't the author particularly mention Mehta and government instead of saying Mehta and group? My interpretation of this usage is that *group* includes people of Mehta's ethnicity (Indians) but the author did not dare to be that explicit.

#### **4.2.3 Was anyone watching the gate?**

As pointed out in the previous chapter on methods, the media and its workers are gatekeepers, checking what is published and throwing out what readers never get to see. It is my contention that the kind of Letters that *Monitor* was receiving prior to the riots should have been a clear indication of what was likely to happen in a demonstration related to the proposed give away of Mabira forest. The readers were angry, which is ok, but the manner in which that anger was being expressed indicated that Asians could be targeted in the event of a demonstration. When a reader threatens that an entire race in Uganda would be sent packing just because of the actions of one member of that race, alarm bells should have gone off.

I can think of two conclusions from these Letters;

- 1) They show that a certain section of Ugandans could have a deep seated hatred for Asians, so deep that they publicly declare it.

2) The media perpetrates this hatred by allowing such statements to go to print, without counter statements from Asians, for example.

#### 4.2.4 Post-riot Letters

Whereas racist sentiments gain in boldness in the days leading up to the riots, the days after the riots witnessed a somewhat more balanced, albeit still racist reference to Asians. That is the subject of the next section of the analysis of *Monitor* Letters.

*Monitor* usually chooses one of the Letters sent in and gives it particular focus, referring to it as *Days Pick* on the Letters' page. In the *Days Pick* (L, 15.04.07, M) titled "Racist attacks are repugnant", the reader lists reasons why racist attacks are a bad idea:

The anger and hostility exhibited against people of Asian descent in Thursdays demonstration was totally uncalled for—and must be condemned by all right –thinking people in Uganda. It is unfortunate that the Mabira forest demonstration degenerated in to an anti- Asian riot. We should know that this kind racist attack diversely affects future investments in Uganda; foreign investors will fear to invest their capital in the country for fear of xenophobic behaviour by some demonstrators. Thursday's hooliganism is casting Uganda as a high- risk investment area!

The other effect of racist behaviour by the demonstrators is this: many Ugandans working in foreign-owned companies might lose their jobs. Or, these companies might consider relocating to non-violent countries, which have a more conducive investment climate. This would translate into loss of government revenue and signal an end to government programs such as the free primary and secondary education we are enjoying today.

(L, 15.04.07, M)

Whereas it appears that the writer is sorry that indigenous Ugandans have behaved like barbarians towards Asians, the contributor does not seem to be interested in the rights of Asians. He actually does not mention the rights of Asians at all in the Letter. Rather, he is more disturbed by the possible consequences to Uganda and Ugandans as a result of targeting Asians, thereby displaying what could qualify as banal nationalism since it is a subtle way of expressing nationalism.

Another Letter makes a brief analysis of the performance of SCOUL, arguing that the company has been mediocre and that it had so far failed to pay its current landlords. This

Letter concludes in part that; “leave Mabira forest alone and stop insulting Ugandan landlords with your Shs500 [instead of 5000 shillings] per acre. [...] take lessons from Thursday’s demonstration. It was a clear call against exploitation”, (L, 15.04.07, M).

My key interest here is the use of the term ‘Ugandan landlords’: why did he need to specifically call them that? He could have referred to them as ‘land lords’, for example. It is a local Ugandan newspaper, it would have been clear to whoever is reading that it is landlords in Uganda that are being referred to. It seems to me that to use ‘Ugandan landlords’ sets the landlords, who are indigenous Ugandans, against “them”, the Mehtas who are foreigners. He thus portrays “them” as exploiting “us”, indigenous or true Ugandans, represented here by the Ugandan landlords. I do not believe that the writer would have used this very terminology when referring to landlords if Mehta was an indigenous Ugandan.

In this period, *Monitor* was running a question on the Letters pages encouraging readers to apportion blame for the riot-gone bad situation. The question was; “Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo riot?” Many readers blamed it on Mehta, as can be seen from this: “Mehta is to blame because he is tempering with Uganda’s life by giving conditions to citizens.” (SL, 17.04.07, M) I find this statement to be loaded with meaning. Although this writer does not directly come across as harbouring racist sentiments, the use of the words “tempering with Uganda’s life” is an indication that Mehta is a foreigner, not a part of Uganda’s life, not a Ugandan. He grounds this sentiment by the use of the term ‘citizen’, once again implying that Mehta and probably his lot are not citizens so they should not be giving conditions to *true* citizens of Uganda, who in this instance seem to be the indigenous Ugandans.

On April 20, a few more readers respond to *Monitor’s* question as to whom they think is responsible for the violence. Many readers seem to believe that it is Mehta or Asians (particularly Indians) or both as one reader writes; “Indians are to blame for having (claiming) authority over Uganda’s properties.” (SL, 20.04.07, M) The generalisation in the use of the word “Indians” could be interpreted as a form of stereotypical marginalisation (simplified generalisations about particular groups) (Eide, 2004). Since Mehta, who is of Indian origin, owns property in Uganda, all Indians therefore own property in Uganda. This kind of thinking easily leads to the unsubstantiated notion that all Indians in Uganda are wealthy. The writer grounds his apparent prejudice against Indians in the reference to “Uganda’s properties”. This could mean that Indians, whether citizens or not, are not part of the ownership of that which

belongs to indigenous Ugandans, displaying a form of othering (separating “us” from “them”).

The following day, another reader declares: “Mehta’s utterances caused all this”. (i.e. the demonstration and the killings). He concludes with; “This is Uganda which is for Ugandans”, (SL, 21.04.07, M) implying that the Mehtas of this world will never be Ugandans.

#### **4.2.5 A nation in repentance?**

After the riots took place, there was a noticeable change in the kind of Letters that were carried. It is not possible to tell whether this is because the newspaper had suddenly woken up to the racist tone of the Letters preceding the riot, or there simply were much less such Letters coming in. Anyhow, it seems that witnessing people getting killed was a wake-up call to all newspaper workers who seem to have been sleeping and abandoned their gatekeeping role prior to the riot.

A couple of Letters here show sympathy with Asians; a lead Letter entitled “Attack on Asians outraged” reads in part as follows: “The lynching of an Asian man and other violent attacks directed at Ugandans of Indian descent was very unfortunate, outrageous, and unforgivable. What did these innocent people going about their business have to do with the Mabira give-away?” (L, 16.04.07).

This is the very first time in *Monitor* Letters pages in April that anyone acknowledges that Indians may actually be Ugandans as they are here referred to as *Ugandans of Indian decent*. Whereas prior to the riots Indians were being indirectly referred to as non-Ugandans, it seems some indigenous Ugandans are waking up to the reality that some Indians are Ugandans and have as much right to the country as indigenous Ugandans.

The soul-searching and sympathy with Asians continues in another Letter:

“When I saw the shocking pictures on one of the daily newspapers of an Asian being lynched by rowdy protesters, I almost cried both for the innocent man and for my country. How could normal people pounce on an innocent man and stone him to death just because one Indian wants to destroy Mabira forest?” (L, 16.04.07, M)

While another reader says:

“As part of a race that has been oppressed, abused, enslaved, raped and grossly misrepresented, it should be we to condemn in the strongest language possible, the events that rocked our city...resulting in the death of three and injuring many others” (L, 18.04.07, M).

The day before which was April 17, another ‘first’ happens on the Letters pages; an Asian makes a contribution when he writes:

Asians must come out openly as a community and publicly criticise and oppose Mehta and his shoddy ventures. Why should innocent Asians be the victims when Mehta comfortably sits in his office and makes ridiculous demands? (L, 17.04.07, M).

This is the very first time that an Asian reader is quoted as sending in a readers’ Letter on the issue of Mabira forest. He is obviously annoyed by the actions of Mehta and challenges his fellow Asians to speak out against him. I think the riot that led to an expression of resentment against Asians was a turning point both for Ugandan-Asians and indigenous Ugandans. For many an indigenous Ugandan, it became a time of soul-searching, while for some Asians, it seems to have been a sort of wake-up call. Some within the community suddenly realise that they need to stand up and be counted, to speak out on the issue as opposed to keeping a low profile and hope it would all just go away. It is however noteworthy that this contributor refers to Asians and not Asian Ugandans. It could indicate that in some ways, even Asians do not really think of themselves as Ugandans.

On 18<sup>th</sup> April, there develops an interesting twist to the rhetoric; what about the dead indigenous Ugandans? There seems to be a feeling that media reports are focusing on the death of the Asian but with apparent little interest in the indigenous Ugandans that were killed during the riot:

Media reports regarding Mabira demonstrations [...] are only highlighting the killed Indian Devang Rawal, his life and future plans. What about the two Ugandans who died? How did they die? What were their plans? Whose sons were they? [...] Can’t we hold any prayers for their souls? (L, 18.04.07, M).

This Letter was prompted by media reports about the Indian who was killed. These reports had detailed his life story and future plans (he was due to return to India to marry his bride).

The protest by the reader above raises a valid issue. It is true that there may be racist sentiments expressed in the various readers' Letters I have so far looked at, and racism cannot be excused at whatever cost. On the other hand, there may be factors that easily lead to racism and here the writer hints on one of them; the fact that indigenous Ugandans are sometimes treated like second rate citizens in comparison to the moneyed investors. The murdered Indian, Devang Rawal, was covered in the media with every detail of his life, while the indigenous Ugandans who were killed in the same riot are barely mentioned by name.

The theme of favouritism of foreigners continues in subsequent days as expressed in a Letter published on April 24:

Some Letters to the editor have expressed sentiments about the relationship between racism and investors. In doing so, I note that there is great enthusiasm for the protection of foreigners in the country. That is commendable but I pray that the same courtesy is accorded the native Ugandans who often times suffer unspeakable racism from our guests. Ask those who happen to work for them... (L, 24.04.07, M)

This input hints upon the common perception that foreigners, especially Asian investors, are said to treat their indigenous employees badly. On the same newspaper page, another writer sounds some sort of warning when he says: "The Asian community is better placed remaining politically neutral. If they take a position that casts them as the incumbent leadership's blue-eyed children that would not bode well", (L, 24.04.07, M).

While it is good that the issue of favouring investors is raised, the way it is raised here comes across as a form of accumulation marginalisation where the acts of one are blamed on all (Eide, 2004). It may be true that some foreign bosses mistreat their indigenous Ugandan employees, but it is hardly possible that all bosses do so. By bundling them in a category that the writer refers to as "our guests", he does not leave room for the possibility that some of those guests might actually be good employers.

## **4.3 New Vision Letters**

### **4.3.0 A smaller dose of racist sentiments**

The difference in the way the two newspapers presented readers' Letters is not only to do with the numbers of Letters they published. As mentioned in section 4.1, *Monitor* carried 133

Letters that had to do with the Mabira forest give-away, or with Asians. On the other hand, *New Vision* published only 14 Letters on the same issue in the entire month of April 2007.

The other difference is in the tone of the Letters published by *New Vision*. These present a noticeable variance from Letters carried by *Monitor*, especially in the pre-riot period. I found fewer instances of racist sentiments and it was rare that the actions of Mehta were linked to his race, and his company SCOUL thought of as a foreigner's company.

Despite this general characteristic, I found a few cases that represented a harsh form of marginalisation in the Letters. One reader first expresses sadness at the decision by the government to give away a part of the forest, which in my opinion is reasonable enough. But at the end of the Letter, he lashes out at Mehta in a manner that could come across as exclusionist: "Ugandans will boycott Mehta's products, just like Mahatma Gandhi led Indians to boycott British-made salt" (L, 01.04.07, NV).

I find this to be an instance of "us" and "them" because by comparing Mehta's products to British made salt, he has concluded that Mehta is not Ugandan, therefore his products should be considered Indian. Mehta's products are Indian therefore foreign, just like British-made salt<sup>34</sup> was foreign by virtue of being made by foreigners in India. Additionally, this insinuates that this writer considers Mehta a colonialist since he is comparing him to the British who not only were foreigners in India at the time, but were India's colonisers. The problem though is that unlike the British who were actually foreign to India, Mehta is not a foreigner in Uganda, he is Ugandan.

Another contributor makes a point of mentioning the wealth that the Mehtas have reaped from Uganda when he writes:

May the Mehtas, whilst enjoying their wine on the 19<sup>th</sup> hole at their magnificent golf-course, decide with humility to seek [sic] [read desist] from this unnatural gift [sic] [read demand] they want from Ugandans. Should Uganda, gifted by nature, be destroyed by the Mehtas? (L, 09.04.07, NV).

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<sup>34</sup> Indians revolted against salt tax introduced by a British company in the late 1930's, see <http://www.thenagain.info/webchron/india/SaltMarch.html> (accessed 19-11-10)



This statement gives the impression that the writer is juxtaposing *Uganda* and *Ugandans* as the “us”, with the Mehtas as the “them”. It sounds like he is saying “you came to *our* country (therefore you are a foreigner), *we* treated you well and *you* gained wealth from it, now *you* want to destroy *our* natural treasures.” In my view, this comes across as a case of social class rhetoric through privileged minority.

Another reader also contributes to this rhetoric when he expresses his opinion about Mehta’s actions with passion. In the process, he provides a clear example of the “us” “them” attitude in a Letter entitled; “How can the Mehta Group set terms in Uganda?”

I was shocked when I read that SCOUL has set terms under which it can abandon its claim on Mabira Forest! How can Ugandan politicians accept that kind of arrogance? This is our country and the investors cannot dictate terms to us. It is time for all Ugandans to wake up and oppose this nonsense with one voice. If foreigners want to destroy nature, they can destroy it in their own country” (L, 06.04.07, NV).

Once again, Uganda and Ugandans are used as terms of exclusion when viewed in light of the writer referring to *foreigners* wanting to destroy nature, and telling them to go destroy the nature in *their* own country. Mehta is a foreigner and should go back where he came from and ruin the nature there. It is understandable that one should feel that foreign investors, if indeed they are foreign, should not be expected to make outrageous demands in the countries they want to operate. It is however not justifiable to bundle every investor in the foreigner bracket.

This Letter could also reveal that a border between the races has been crossed. The boundaries have been disturbed by the terms and conditions that Mehta is setting if he is to abandon his interest in the forest. Therefore members of the “us” feel they need to reinforce that border, thus the call to all Ugandans to arise and put foreigners back in their place.

#### **4.3.1 Reasoned Letters**

The major difference I have come across between Letters in *Monitor* and those in *New Vision* has to do with the tone of a cross section of the latter’s Letters. I found that whereas many Letters in *Monitor* were just an outpouring of anger from readers, anger that was in many cases directed at Mehta as an Asian and at Asians in general, a number of *New Vision* Letters were either more reflected and well-reasoned, or they managed to rebuke president Museveni and Mehta as a businessman without dragging his ethnicity in. One possible explanation to

this trend is the fact that many of *Monitors* Letters were by SMS, which by nature can be more spontaneous and not as thought through as ordinary Letters. Below are some examples:

*Can Mehta prove his claims about Mabira?*

I am now convinced Mehta thinks Ugandans have stunted brains. SCOUL claims they have been planting trees for the last 15 years and yet the picture of their pine plantation shows trees which are hardly three years old” ( New Vision printed this picture), (L, 14.04.07, NV).

This writer has obviously done some homework; he has taken the trouble to listen to some of Mehta’s arguments, the claim that SCOUL is not out to destroy the forest, but is instead re-foresting. He has taken this claim and evaluated it in light of the pictures of forests that Mehta claims to have planted 15 years back. And he has come to the conclusion that the man is a liar. This writer’s contribution is therefore not just an outpouring of anger, but an analysis based on the facts availed to him.

A few more Letters managed to question the role of government in the Mabira saga with calmness and reason:

*Good leaders listen to public opinion*

I am perturbed that in spite of thousands of pleas from the public, civic organisations and NGOs, the government appears to be proceeding unabated with the plans of de-gazetting 7,100 hectares of Mabira Forest out of the 32,000hectares. When people boldly speak out on a given subject, any good leadership ought to pause and listen (L, 05.04.07, NV).

One reader questions whether the establishment in Uganda understands democratic governance; “[The presidents] assumption that it is the political class – the executive that has the power to decide on Mabira is to miss the whole essence of democratic governance that he fought for” (L, 19.04.07, NV).

These are examples of readers who have managed to rise above raw racist utterances against Asians. They have been able to see the real villains in the Mabira forest drama; Mehta and the presidency of Uganda. I find it surprising that *New Vision*, which is partly owned by government, should be the one to carry Letters that are directly critical of government’s decision to give away part of the forest. Secondly, judging by the small number of Letters that showed racial tendencies compared to *Monitor*, it appears that *New Vision* did a better job of

gate-keeping. They seem to have been in better control of the agenda in the newspaper than *Monitor* does.

#### 4.3.2 After riots

Similar to the change in tone on *Monitor's* Letters pages from hostility to Asians before the riots, to national soul-searching after the riot, *New Vision* carries a couple of Letters expressing shame at the way Asians were treated.

The writer laments: "Last Thursday was a very dark day in Uganda's modern history. How could we express our political disagreements in such a barbaric manner?..." The lamentation continues in another Letter: "When I saw the pictures of the demonstration in Kampala in the *New Vision* yesterday, I could not believe it! I have always heard about the tough times of Idi Amin and I was taken aback" (L, 18.04.07, NV).

As was the case in *Monitor* where soul-searching was closely followed by Letters on the alleged bad behaviour of some Asians in Uganda, *New Vision* carries a Letter that should get society to rethink indigenous Ugandan-Asian relations:

##### *Indians should make an effort to integrate in Uganda*

Ugandan Asians in their quest for recognition as one of Ugandan tribes should seek to integrate themselves among the local people. Secluding themselves using the Indian caste system is detrimental and only helps to build a wall between them and the Ugandan society, well known for hospitality towards visitors. Ugandan Asians ought to make more visible efforts to discard a social system where some are Brahmins and others are untouchables. This caste system has in the past formed the basis for some Indians' relationship with Ugandan people [...] to have a win-win situation, it is better to address some of the social inequalities before calling Ugandans racists, which is injurious to the country's reputation. A few Indians in Uganda tend to harbour some kind of apartheid-like attitudes of self-segregation. Moreover, Indian investors in Uganda often ghettoise the Africans into low skilled jobs in their enterprises while hiring unskilled persons from India christened "expatriates" as managers. This is not to fan hatred towards Indians in Uganda or to sabotage foreign investment but Indians have to realise that we all have a part to play in harmonious co-existence (L, 24.04.07, NV).

This is the only Letter that attempts to explain the apparent introvert nature of the Indian community in Uganda. The writer essentially insinuates that what may appear as racism and

segregation against indigenous Ugandans may simply have its roots in the fact that the Indian society is divided in caste systems where some are up there and some down here.

This segregation may therefore not be a deliberate effort against indigenous Ugandans, but rather a deep seated aspect of the Indian culture that they need to consciously deal with in their relations to indigenous Ugandans. This opinion clearly points out that riots like the one of April 12 can be avoided if both Asians and indigenous Ugandans realise that they both have to contribute to a peaceful co-existence. The subject of the role of Asians in fostering hatred against them by indigenous Ugandans is explored further in chapter 5.

## **4.4 Good gate keeping**

### **4.4.0 New Vision**

According to information obtained from *New Vision* Letters and Opinions department by telephone in November 2010, they receive between 300 and 800 Letters from their readers weekly. Of these, it was estimated that between 30 and 50 per cent are published. The Letters sent to the newspaper are about a current or on-going issue usually of public concern. The Letters that get published are selected on the basis of content, relevance to the issue at hand at a given time, and clarity. The department tries to as much as possible avoid Letters that are seditious or a direct attack on an individual, group of individuals or a company. Aggressive Letters are edited and toned down if they tend to promote hatred or racism, but in most cases such Letters are not published at all. The department believes that publishing such Letters may bring problems in society such as provoking the readers to take action or participate in a negative campaign against the target of the Letters. They believe that many people rely on the media to make decisions therefore they try as much as possible not to publish negative Letters.

They explained that they carried few Letters about the debate on the Mabira issue (compared to *Monitor*) because most of the Letters they received were a repetition and therefore, there was no need to keep running Letters on the same issue even if they were from different authors.

### **4.4.1 Monitor**

The Opinions editor of *Monitor* Margaret Vuchiri said in an email interview in November 2010 that on average, she receives about 600 Letters on week days and between 450 and 500

Letters on weekends. On average, they publish seven Letters daily and four on Saturday and Sunday. She added that the Letters they publish must be topical, issue-driven and based on verifiable facts as opposed to polemic observations or personal attacks.

The selection of Letters for publication is based on the newspaper's editorial guideline on how to approach controversial issues like tribalism, racism and homosexuality. For example *Monitor* stands for human rights, which includes protection of minority rights. She said when a Letter involves a minority group; the policy is that the Letter must not cross the line in a way that may incite people against the target of the Letter.

Asked why some Letters published in April 2007 were aggressive and tended to incite people against Mehta and Asians, Ms Vuchiri said the person in charge at that time probably chose to ignore the newspaper's guidelines that have been in existence for as long as the newspaper has existed. "Those Mabira articles actually raised a lot of concern even from Nairobi [where the mother company of *Monitor* is based] because the editor then didn't adhere to guidelines," she said.

In the absence of a definite definition of good or bad gatekeeping, I have used the editorial policies of *New Vision* and *Monitor* to investigate if the two were good gatekeepers or not. Since *New Vision* generally adhered to their editorial policy in the Letters they published, it seems that they were better gatekeepers than *Monitor* which wavered away from its own editorial policy.

## **4.5 Summary**

In this chapter I begun by presenting and discussing tables that show the number of newspaper content carried by both *Monitor* and *New Vision*, with the major observation being that the former had a much wider coverage of the issue than the latter.

From the combined analysis of *Monitor* and *New Vision* Letters, a particular trend developed as the story of the give-away of Mabira forest developed throughout April. From the beginning of the month to the day of the riot, the general stance on the Letters pages, especially in *Monitor* was anger at Asians. This anger quickly evolved to empathy and support when outright racism was expressed by the killing of Devang Rawal and the targeting of Asians in Kampala. As the month winds down, the stance has changed again, with a mix of writers either saying the favouring of Asians has gone to hysterical levels, or warning that

Asians need to identify more with indigenous Ugandans as opposed to siding with the establishment.



## 5 ANALYSIS USING FRAMING

### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter first presents Hard News material covering the day of riots and the aftermath thereof as carried by *Monitor* and *New Vision* (photographs from the riots in appendix 2, pg. 125-128). By so doing, the segment attempts to give a picture of what really happened on the 12 of April 2007, with the hope that this will deepen the understanding of this event. Thereafter follows a discussion on how the relationship between Asians and indigenous Ugandans was reflected in Opinions, Features and a few Hard News stories in *Monitor* and *New Vision*.

As mentioned in chapter three, banal journalism/nationalism and marginalisation, privileged status and identity construction can often lead to or manifest itself in the “us” and “them” dichotomy. Except for the Letters pages, many of which had outright aggression towards Asians prior to the protest, nearly no single Opinion, Hard News, or Feature has direct racist sentiments. This however does not mean that instances of racial anger do not feature. It just means that they are more subtly expressed. Furthermore, despite the fact that *New Vision* seems to have fewer cases of racial undertones compared to *Monitor*, they can still be found here and there.

Unlike chapter four which mostly focuses on the “us”-“them” binary, this chapter additionally presents articles and extracts from articles that deal with other issues in the debate about the place of Asians in Uganda. I believe that taking a look at these issues has guided me to a more balanced conclusion as regards the press representation of attitudes of the two groups towards each other. It helped me in the attempt to deduct if the stage is being set for a major clash, and to assess whether Asians are in danger of being thrown out of Uganda again.

**5.1 Fig. 4 Table showing Hard News, Opinions and Feature stories published in Monitor and New Vision in April 2007 (N = 155)**

GENRE	MONITOR	NEW VISION
Hard News	38	38



Features	14		7	
Opinions	GW	24	GW	23
	SW	4	SW	1
	E	5	E	1

**GW= Guest Writer**

**SW = Staff Writer**

**E = Editorial**

Both *Monitor* and *New Vision* published 38 Hard News articles about the Mabira forest giveaway and the consequences thereof. *Monitor* published 14 Feature stories while *New Vision* published 7 such articles. Regarding Opinions, *Monitor* ran 33 articles written by either staff writers (SW) or guest writers (GW) or Editorials (E). *New Vision* on the other hand ran 25 Opinion articles. Twenty three of these were written by guest writers, one by a staff writer and one was an editorial. In both publications, guest writers' articles featured more than those by staff writers.

## **5.2 The riot and immediate aftermath**

In both *New Vision* and *Monitor* coverage of the riot itself, I identified a number of frames such as: Asians and their properties targeted, police offers Asians protection and Asians go into hiding as presented below.

### **5.2.1 Asians and their properties targeted**

The newspapers reported that what was supposed to be a peaceful demonstration aimed at preserving Mabira forest, deteriorated into an expression of violence against Asians. The riot then saw the killing of two indigenous Ugandans, Umar Kimera and Lawrence Semyalo. An

Indian national, Devang Rawal, was also killed, leading to running battles with the police. *Monitor's* lead story the day after the riots read in part as follows:

The first casualty was an Asian man who, scared by a mob whose anger he could not understand, tried to 'escape' on a motorcycle through the crowd at the Clock Tower. As fate would have it the crowd interpreted this for defiance.

In a ghastly scene witnessed by *Monitor*, the rowdy protestors pulled the man off the bike and stoned him.

Two other people were shot dead by security guards who shot live bullets as the demonstration went out of control. [...] Yesterday's demonstration which had begun peacefully at the Uganda Railways headquarters in Kampala at 8am turned violent when protesters started targeting Asian businesses at the Shopper's Stop Plaza-owned by the Ugandan Asian Mukwano industrial family and the Hindu Temple located on Snay Bin Amir Rise (HN, 13.04.07, M).

In this article, *Monitor* shows some sympathy to Rawal by writing that he was scared and by bringing out his innocence through his portrayal as a man who did not understand why the demonstrators seemed to be angry at him. The story further captures the misunderstandings that can often lead to confrontation; Rawal was only trying to run for his life, but the crowd interpreted this as defiance. This extract indicates that at that moment, Rawal seemed to be the embodiment of Mehta and Asians. Mehta was defiant to pleas to drop his interest in Mabira; Rawal was being defiant when he wildly tries to escape the crowd.

On their part, *New Vision* also wrote about the casualties from the riot, and then gave a more detailed report of the days happenings:

Demonstrators also smashed the windows of the Hindu Temple, with an estimated 40 Asians trapped inside and attempted to burn down the mosque near Shoprite. A trailer loaded with sugar, belonging to [indigenous Ugandan] Tom Mugenga, a city tycoon with links to prominent Asians, was stopped and set ablaze. The driver fled.

Asian owned Bank of Baroda's windows were smashed and Uganda Wines and Spirits shop was vandalised during the melee. A shop owned by Asians in Katwe on Sapoba building was looted of brand new motorcycles worth millions of shillings. At Entebbe Road, any car that passed by driven by anyone of Asian origin was lobbed with stones, shattering their wind

screens. An Asian driving opposite Kamu Kamu plaza was beaten by rioters but was saved by Police.

[...] an Asian only known as Kumar D riding a motorcycle, was besieged by rioters who moved to rough him up. [...] Rioters attacked a van belonging to an unidentified Asian and smashed his windscreen.

An Asian who was driving a pick-up near Conrad plaza was stoned and his vehicle destroyed. He sped off. Rioters also burnt a trailer [...] they believed belonged to an Asian. Several Asians, including the owner of Landis Limited, R.G. Patel and his wife, were rescued by the Police. Patel was later admitted in Kampala International Hospital (HN, 13.04.07, NV).

These were the lead stories on 13 April, the day after the riots, in both *Monitor* and *New Vision*. Both newspapers generally had similar accounts of the proceedings of the day, but one difference was that *Monitor* carried a blow by blow account, while *New Vision* tended to give an overview of the day's events. Another difference was that *Monitor* in some cases referred to some Asians as *Ugandan-Asians*, while *New Vision* only used the word *Asians* regardless of whether they were referring to foreign Asians or Ugandan Asians.

Both reports clearly bring out whom the crowd perceives as the villains; Asians; as seen in the attack against this group and its properties. In many Letters quoted and analysed in chapter four, there is an outpouring of verbal anger not only against Mehta, but also against Asians and indigenous Ugandans perceived to support Asians. On the day of riots, it turns out that the threats to harm Asians were not empty threats; the verbal anger translates into violence against Asians as these reports show. These reports show a frenzied kind of nationalism which arguably stemmed from nationalistic feelings and expressions that had prior to the conflict only existed at the level of banal nationalism.

### **5.2.2 Police offer Asians protection**

In this section are excerpts about the efforts of the police to protect Asians in the wake of the attacks as they appeared in *Monitor*:

Police fired tear gas and live bullets to stop rioters from attacking Asians [that] the protestors linked to Mehta and their businesses. Police spent most of the evening soothing sections of the Asian community in Kampala frightened by mob attacks. Scores had sought refuge at the Central Police Station (CPS). Although deployed in the city to quash the riots, the

combined force of police and the military, spent much of the afternoon protecting fleeing Asians from protestors (HN, 13.04.07, M).

Police offered vehicles to transport Asians from shops to their homes and also picked their children from schools in the city centre. A police bus, escorted by Military Police drove through the city rescuing frightened Asians. The bus picked Asians from Capital Shoppers supermarket in Kampala, Nakasero Market and Snay Bin temple (Ibid).

Another unidentified Asian priest was rescued from a mob at the Queen's Way on Entebbe Road. A Toyota Land cruiser with personalized number plates Mira, which had many Asians on board was escorted by a military patrol through Queen's Way (HN, 13.04.07, M) [...] There was heavy deployment of Police and military Police presence around the vandalised shops (Ibid).

From this report, it appears that government and law enforcement bodies went out of their way to protect Asians, so much so that it provides one of the best examples of their privileged status in Uganda.

It could be argued that government was simply doing its duty of protecting a vulnerable section of society. However the vehemence with which this, according to the newspaper reports, was done, leaves one wondering whether they would have done just as much for a group that is not as affluent in society. This kind of report could have been partially catalytic to the general feeling that Asians in Uganda are favoured as expressed in a number of Letters and Opinions in *New Vision* and *Monitor* in the aftermath of the riot.

### **5.2.3 Asians go into hiding**

Following the riot in which Asians were targeted; many were reported to have gone into hiding. Some Asians reportedly fled Uganda, crossing into Kenya and for some days, Asians were a rare sight on the streets of Kampala:

Indians in Kampala were yesterday still shaken by the anti-Mabira Forest give-away riots, despite assurances from their leaders that everything was under control. Shangu Patel of the Indian Association went around the city encouraging Asians to reopen their shops but his efforts were met with scepticism.

At Astra Pharma Uganda Ltd on Wilson Lane, Sadik Astra, the owner, was still scared. "How can we be very sure that there will be no repeat?"

asked Sadik, who was with three brothers and workers. He did not open the shop.

Vigjang Patel of Victoria Forex Bureau on Luwum Street was locked inside his premises when Shangu arrived at around midday. Close by, Genesis Uganda, was also still locked, with its owners and workers inside. Shangu had to knock hard on the metallic doors before the frightened Asians came out. His efforts to get Pharma Health centre on Wilson Road opened, yielded no fruit [...].

When *The New Vision* visited the five-floor Universal Building on Luwum Street that houses over 200 Indians, the situation looked tense. A lady on the top floor withdrew when she saw the journalists. A young man, who was speaking in English suddenly claimed that he did not understand the language and refused to talk to the journalists.

Efforts to talk to other families were futile as they looked unwilling and very scared (HN, 13-04-07, NV).

By press time unconfirmed reports had suggested that some Asians had fled to Kenya through Busia at the Uganda Kenya border post while many others remained holed up at CPS (HN, 13-04-07, M).

Entebbe Road at Kalitunsi Stage became a sanctuary for the Asian community as scores of Asians running for their lives sought refuge there (HN, 13.04.07, NV).

From these stories, both *New Vision* and *Monitor* show some sympathy with and portray how vulnerable the Asian community in Kampala can be. They are scared, they are in hiding, and they are fleeing the country. Many may be rich and therefore privileged, but that privilege has not exempted them from attacks. It has actually made them easy targets since their business enterprises are everywhere and therefore easy to identify and vandalise.

The newspapers also demonstrate that some Asians have become distrustful of some indigenous Ugandans; not only are they scared of the consequences of showing their faces; some will not even talk to the press. This could indicate that indeed some Asian communities tend to be closed societies, but it could also just mean that they simply do not feel at home in Uganda. I would imagine that if one felt at home, they would express their views to news workers even in times of tragedy. It rather appears that even the news workers, who are indigenous Ugandans, are seen as part of the tormenters of Asians in the on-going conflict.

### **5.2.4 Day after riots**

A day after the riots, the Mehta group is reported to have expressed shock at the magnitude of violence in the city during the riot:

I am terribly shocked by what happened. I feel very sorry for the loss of lives. It should not have happened,” the regional director of Mehta group, Sharma Suresh said yesterday in reaction to the Thursday violence in which one Asian and two Ugandans were killed. (HN, 13.04.07, NV)

Asked whether his company would still be interested in acquiring part of Mabira forest despite the riot, Sharma indicated that they were just waiting for the government’s approval before they went ahead with the project. He referred the reporter to President Museveni’s reaction to the riot. The president had reacted to the riot with defiance, scoffing at critics who opposed the forest give-away, saying he would not be deterred by people who did not see where the future of Africa lay.

These reports portray Mehta as a greedy and heartless man who seems determined to proceed with his bid for the forest despite the public outcry against it, and the precarious state it has put Asians in. It also echoes what many contributors in the Letters pages have been complaining about; the liaison between Mehta and the government in Uganda, which is discussed further in 5.3.3.

## **5.3 Introduction**

Having presented the proceedings of April 12 as they were covered by the two newspapers in stories published on April 13, I continue with a discussion of some frames that were recurrent in the stories about Asians and the riot. Most of the newspaper content quoted or referred to in this section is from opinion genres (opinions, commentaries and editorials) since these are the genres where writers were more open with their views about the Mabira forest debate and Asians. Some content is from Feature stories since these tended to be more reflected than Hard News. Hard News articles feature only a few times in this section. The frames that I have identified from studying the material include:

-The nationalistic frame where Asians are 1, not considered Ugandans, and 2, accused of taking the property of Uganda and exploiting Ugandans.

-The counter-frame where Asians demand constitutional recognition in the wake of racist attacks.

-The favouritism frame whereby Asians are accused of either conniving with or being favoured by the establishment.

-The envy frame where indigenous Ugandans are jealous of Asians.

- The quark-investor frame whereby some Asians are said to masquerade as investors when they really are petty traders.

### **5.3.1 Asians are not Ugandans**

In this segment, I look at instances in the media material where indigenous Ugandans directly or indirectly, refer to or imply that Asians as non-Ugandans, thereby manifesting a form of racism or segregation.

An example of this situation is a Hard News story about a meeting between the Regional Director of SCOUL Suresh Sharma and a group of environmentalists. The group was led by leading environmentalist Frank Muramuzi, opposition parliamentarians Beatrice Anywar and environment professor Oweyegha Afunaduula. They had gone to Sharma's office to try persuade him and his company to drop the bid to acquire part of Mabira forest. A week before this meeting, the group had mobilized the Ugandan public to boycott the company's sugar, with some success. Thus in this meeting, one of their strong arguments was that the general public had expressed strong support of efforts against the give- away.

The conversation between the two groups reads in part as follows:

We are warning and the people have said they would resist this up to blood level. You are part of us and are conniving with the government to cheat Ugandans...Can we request that you withdraw your interests from Mabira? There are other alternatives. I can lead you to Kitgum.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Kitgum is a district in Northern Uganda, approximately 500 km away from the contested forest and SCOUL factories. The MP is suggesting there's plenty of uncontested land there that the sugar company could instead use.

-“Impossible, impractical”, a defiant Sharma replied.

-Mr. Muramuzi said they would make sure that “you do not survive in this country if you take Mabira”, but the determined Sharma said “every citizen of Uganda is free to do anything, I do not mind” (HN, 05.04.07, M).

It seems that these statements are loaded with racial undertones. When the environmentalists, all of whom are indigenous Ugandans, say ‘you are part of us’, what do they mean? I believe this means “we are aware that you are a citizen of Uganda, even if you are of Asian origin, and we are willing to accept you as such as long as you do as we request” Thus the phrase ‘the people’, that is to say ‘your fellow Ugandans’, “are requesting that you drop this because they do not want it, and if you profess to be a true Ugandan, you too will not want this forest ruined.”

This line of thinking does not seem to move Sharma, and this seems to be the point where banal nationalism kicks in. The lines separating the races suddenly sharpen, and the indigenous Ugandans seem to be more threatened by this self- confident Asian. Whereas a moment earlier they were willing to consider him Ugandan, suddenly he is not, because in the next statement, they declare that they would make sure he would not survive ‘in this country’.

This could be considered a confirmation of Inka Moring’s (2001) views on identity construction where hegemonic power acts to reinforce the boundaries around different groups or nations when these are perceived crossed.

I believe the statement from the environmentalists declares that “look, we are trying to be generous by considering you one of us, but since you will not subscribe to our demands, we now cross the bridge back to our side of the line, to the fact that we are indigenous Ugandans and you are not” . The use of the word ‘survive’ could mean that Sharma and his group are here on the mercies of indigenous Ugandans, that it is they that allow him to survive. And the use of ‘This country’ is a statement of reclaiming, or declaring possession of Uganda, which Sharma is not party to.

The SCOUL director seems to confirm my thinking in his reply, for he promptly declares that “every citizen of Uganda is free to do anything”. My interpretation of the undertones here is that Sharma has understood the fact that they are considering him to be less Ugandan than they are. He therefore takes the opportunity to remind them that “look, I do not care what you



think, I am a Ugandan citizen no matter what you say”. I do not think that Sharma would have felt the need to re-assert his citizenship if he had not felt that it was threatened.

Just like the undertones in this article, several stories both in the *New Vision* and *Monitor* have subtle statements that come across as suggesting that Asians are not Ugandans, they are *them*; outsiders. Later in the same story, the director of the Uganda Investment Authority Maggie Kigozi is quoted as saying: “Ugandans have pronounced themselves towards the preservation of Mabira”. And in another article, the above named MP had advised SCOULS’s chief executive S.C Khana to avoid doing anything “against the will of Ugandans (HN, 04.04.07, M).

Further evidence of the fact that the lines dividing “us” and “them” had been drawn more sharply comes when the same group of environmentalists mentioned earlier pay a visit to the leader of the Indian Association of Uganda (IAU), one Naren Mehta, asking *them* (Indians) to prevail against one of *their* member, Mehta, to drop his demand for the forest (HN, 12.04.07, M). It could be argued that this is an innocent gesture, after all, Mehta is indeed a member of the IAU. This argument, however, would not hold if one considered that Mehta is probably also a member of a number of influential organizations such as The Federation of Uganda Employers and Manufacturers Association. Yet none of these were approached to prevail over their member, only the organisation that has to do with his ethnicity was visited. In a way the Ugandan environmentalists seem to be reasoning that ‘look, we, the *us*, have tried to reason with this man to no avail, so next step, lets report him to *them*, his own people whom we hope might get through to him.’”

However, just like Sharma had earlier reasserted his citizenship when he sensed racist undertones, the chairman of IAU calmly reminds the environmentalists that the issue of Mabira “should not be viewed as a matter for Indians, but a matter for humanity” (HN, 12.04.07, M). In so doing, he attempts to move the debate about Mabira away from the arena of banal nationalism (which the environmentalists seem to be representing); to universalism since a natural rain forest is an issue that could affect all humanity.

The nationalistic frame continues in several articles in *New Vision*, where racist expressions are rarely open but implied. One such instance is in a contribution by John Nagenda, a prominent columnist who is also presidential adviser on media affairs. Earlier on in the debate surrounding the Mabira giveaway, it had emerged that one of the reasons why the company

was asking for new land was because it had lost some of the land it had been leasing after the leases expired. The owners of the lands had refused to renew the leases after SCOUL insisted on paying the old rate of 500 Uganda shillings per acre per year, while the land owners wanted Sh.5000 (about \$2) (O,14.04.07, NV).

In the article, Nagenda writes that he had trouble believing how little SCOUL was insisting on paying for the land. To get clarification on the matter, Nagenda telephones one of the owners of the lands, John Ssenseko Kulubya. Kulubya confirms that the story is true and makes a comment that could come across as racist; “As for Kulubya, he confirmed the story, adding he had invited the Mehtas to return to India and enrich their kinsmen at the rate offered to Ugandans” (Ibid).

This Opinion article could indicate that deep down, even when on the surface some indigenous Ugandans may be willing to accept that Indians are Ugandans, they may not really have done so. I do not think that Kulubya actually could have invited Mehta to return to India it person during their negotiations about the lease. It seems highly unlikely that a man of his respectable public standing (he is a prominent businessman and has aspired to political office several times), could take that risk. It is more likely that during his meeting with the representatives of the sugar company, this sentiment was merely implied. But when Kulubya gets the opportunity to talk to one of “us” (John Nagenda), he can be more open about this sentiment hence it’s being verbalised. He probably did not consider that it would be published, but it might also be that it has not even occurred to Kulubya that this can be a racist statement.

This kind of framing continues in several articles, with the terms Ugandans, citizens, Uganda and so on being used as terms of exclusion connoting the “us”, while Asians, investors, Indians and so on are used to refer to “them”, the outsiders. These terms are italicised below in an Opinion written by *Monitor’s* regular columnist Munini K. Mulera, a Ugandan educationist based in Canada:

It is not surprising that *Ugandans* are fighting back. Unfortunately, some of the frustrated *citizens*, propelled by the universal problem of raw ethnic and racial prejudice, have reacted with resentment towards *Asians*...

Without surrendering their basic human rights, the *Asians* are well advised to side with the *people of Uganda* in the current struggle for justice. A

decision to remain aloof or cosy up to Museveni's repressive and arrogant regime will not guarantee them the safety *they* rightly crave (O, 16.04.07, M).

Besides having the derogatory terms that imply that Asians are not Ugandans, this statement comes across as an indirect threat, a warning to Asians. They are being told that only good behaviour as defined by indigenous Ugandans would guarantee their safety, even if they are citizens of Uganda.

In a similar commentary, former *Monitor* journalist Andrew Mwenda refers to Asians as an *alien* racial minority that lacks social ties with the surrounding society and therefore not able to organise a mass political base (O, GW, 28.04.07, M). The use of the word *alien* is notable. The writer would have just as well made his point by referring to Asians as an ethnic minority, and that would have made the statement less derogatory to Asians.

There are also instances when *Monitor*, in their editorials, use words and phrases that seem to view Asians as a whole as foreigners:

Its current tone of setting demands for Mabira forest land is unacceptable, first of all because *Ugandans* hold all the cards; and secondly because the company should know better than continue on this path – being a corporate citizen of this country (E, 08.04.07, M).

Is it sensible and worth all the trouble to split the country between the *very tiny minority* who wish to destroy this vital rain forest and the *rest of the 28 million Ugandans* who have rejected this dangerous attack on *our* environment? (E, 16.04.07, M)

Who is included in the phrase *very tiny minority* here? It seems that Asians in Uganda have been bundled in this phrase. Had *Monitor* been interested in avoiding the ambiguity of this phrase, they would have referred to the tiny minority by name; that is Mehta. Whereas it is true that Asians are a tiny minority in Uganda, in the case of Mabira forest, it really is a case of one Asian family and not the entire community of Asians resident in Uganda. This general accusation therefore could be considered a case of accumulation marginalisation where one is made into all. It is only one Asian family that is attempting to destroy a forest, but this editorial makes it appear like all Asians are involved in this controversial undertaking.

### 5.3.2 Asians are taking Uganda's property and exploiting Ugandans

Besides the undertones that indicate that Asians may be considered non Ugandans, the nationalistic frame further manifests in references to Asians as property grabbers and exploiters of “genuine” (indigenous) Ugandans. Even with my first perusal of the research material, I noticed that a major frame in the coverage was that Asians were generally viewed as bad employers and considered to have clandestine motives.

Asians were invited back to Uganda to help develop the country through investments that would both create employment and produce the desperately needed basic necessities that the country had been otherwise importing. Over the years since their return, on paper and in the media, they were painted as Uganda's saviour. But the word on the street from the stories of their employees, the comments from their competitors and social-economic analysts give a different picture. It is a picture where indigenous Ugandans are reportedly exploited and experience segregation, a story where Asian investors only seem to be interested in milking the cow and never feeding it. Below are some extracts framed in such a way as to portray that Asians are exploiting indigenous Ugandans and Ugandan property:

If I were president, I would challenge investors to develop arid and semi-arid areas such as Karamoja, like Libya did. They want the best soils **my** country possesses, such as Kalangala, Mabira and Bugala forests. I would not allow them to take advantage of **my** weak growing nation. (O, GW, 01.04.07, NV)

This is the introduction to an opinion by a guest writer, a public relations officer at an NGO known as Christian Children's Fund, called Edgar Byaruhanga. I find this introduction to be a bit of a preferatory statement; the writer assumes he is the president of Uganda, therefore a Ugandan. In the same breath he seems to assume that every investor is a non-Ugandan. Thus he talks about *himself*, the Ugandan, and *they*, the foreign investors. *They* want the best soils of *my* country, *they* want to take advantage of *my* weak nation. An alternative way to start this story could have been;

If I were president, I would challenge investors to develop arid and semi-arid areas such as Karamoja, like Libya did. They want the best soils the country possesses, such as Kalangala, Mabira and Bugala forests. I would not allow them to take advantage of **this** weak growing nation.

In other words, just by changing a few words, this introduction would have reflected a different attitude to “foreigners”. If all investors were non Ugandans as the writer seems to assume, then he would be above fault. The problem is that there can hardly be any nation in the world where all investors are foreigners. Especially since the writer is specifically referring to the investor in the Mabira forest issue, it comes across as an exclusionist statement since the owner is actually Ugandan.

This trail of thought continues in the next extract where guest writer Sheila Kawamara outrightly calls SCOUL a poacher:

SCOUL has failed in sugar production, *exploited Uganda’s cheap labour force and depleted our environment*, yet the management wants to hoodwink Ugandans that in the next five years after grabbing Mabira forest their stars will be turned around and they will break even in their production (O, GW, 05.04.07, NV).

In agreement, another writer says:

To President Museveni, the executives of the Sugar Corporation of Uganda (SCOUL), a subsidiary of the Mehta group of companies, and others whom he is *handing choice real estate and other public assets are the real stakeholders in Uganda*, not the 28 million citizens who call Uganda home. (O, GW, 10.4.07, NV)

While Andrew Mwenda, who was at the time a *Monitor* journalist, concretises the above claim that the president is handing choice real estate and public assets to foreigners:

...Immediately after the 2001 elections, Museveni handed over Butamira forest to the Madhvani Group to plant sugarcane. In 2003, he gave Bugala forest to Bidco to plant oil palm trees. He has since proceeded to give investors prime land in Kampala city, extended to them tax rebates, cheap loans, debt write-offs and subsidies without official policy sanctions (O, SW, 29.04.07, M).

These extracts can be said to represent a form of banal nationalism since the writers are subtly fronting the idea that the presidency and some foreign investors are taking what otherwise should be a common wealth belonging to Uganda as a nation. To their credit, these stories identify individual villains; the government, Mehta, SCOUL, Bidco (an oil manufacturer) among others. They avoid bundling Asians as a whole in the group of villains even if the companies mentioned are Asian- owned.

*Monitor's* Karoli Ssemwogerere gravitates away from the accusation of property grabbing and instead focuses on the bad deal indigenous Ugandans employed by Asians get:

The Asians for better or worse are locked in. They will have to improve community relations with the Africans they employ [...] the fact that they are working in a very poor economy does not mean that the citizens do not aspire for a better way of life (O, GW, 26.04.07, M).

This sentiment is supported by another columnist who claims that although Asians are among the top investors in Uganda's economy, creating thousands of jobs, most of those jobs are of questionable quality (O, GW, 26.04.07, M).

This subject is expounded upon by Richard Twodong who at the time was a special presidential advisor on Northern Uganda. He reflects on Asian Ugandan relations, asserting that indigenous Ugandans employed in Asian owned companies suffer at the hands of their employers, therefore the tension between Ugandans and Indian traders had been building up for some time and Mabira forest was only a spark that lit the fire.

Citing examples of alleged discrimination, he says that the violence should not surprise because there were signs that Ugandan employees and their Indian employers were at the verge of clashing:

The employers are accused of paying Ugandans peanuts compared to their Asian counterparts. Racial discrimination is reportedly being practiced by Asian employers against Ugandans at workplaces. For example, Asians reportedly don't share meals or dining tables with Ugandans even if they are at the same rank. Ugandan female employees are not given maternity leave. As a result, many avoid getting pregnant for fear of losing their jobs.

In some fish processing companies, Ugandan casual labourers are paid Sh800 per day or Sh24,000 (about \$US10) per month, yet their Asian supervisors earn many times more than that. Most of these companies have not registered their employees with NSSF (National Social Security Fund), making Ugandans miss out on saving (O, GW, 30.04.07, NV).

This article can be credited for being specific about the complaints of Ugandans employed in Asian-owned enterprises. It concludes with the suggestion that government needs to move faster in formulating a policy on a minimum wage to diffuse the tension between Ugandans and foreign investors. By so doing, the article is not just stirring troubled waters but rather

taking a dialogic approach to the issue. It presents nationalistic views, but it does not seem like these views are only meant to stress the point that some Asian investors have crossed a line, it instead comes across a suggestion on how bridges between Ugandan employees and their Asian employers can be built. However, not many stores carried this view. A number of stories seemed to sound a war-cry:

Mr Suresh Sharma one of SCOUTS' directors has had the audacity to tell the nation that Mabira forest is the most appropriate for sugarcane growing. He has also had the impudence to state that the company could not drop its interest in Mabira (O, SW, 24.04.07, M).

We talked to the Indian Community to appeal to their member to drop the idea but Mehta seemed determined to take up our forest [...], our property has always gone in such dubious ways and we could not wait for this to happen again (HN, 18.04.07, M).

It seems that the dominance and acquisition of Uganda's property had come full circle at the time Amin sent Asians away. Not only had elite Asians taken huge chunks of land outside the capital Kampala, but they literally seemed to own the town as time went by. Professor Mahmood Mamdani, himself a victim of the Amin expulsion, comments thus:

With its paan and sari shops, and cinema houses showing Bollywood movies, Kampala's population got browner as the sun set and its black workforce left for satellite communities on the edge of town. Pointing to this informal apartheid in a complacent post-independence Uganda, Amin asked uncomfortable questions, even if in a coarse and racist language: 'If Uganda is independent, why does its capital city look like Bombay on a Sunday?' (F, GW, 28.04.07, NV).

Prof. Mamdani is a third generation East African of South Asian origin. An acclaimed academic on African history and social political affairs, Mamdani has written widely on the issue of "the Asian question" in East Africa. He tends towards the thinking that the behaviour of Asians in Uganda may be a big determinant of how their relationship with indigenous Ugandans develops. This subsection covers the nationalistic frame with extracts of content that fall under banal nationalism; authors who are being nationalistic about Ugandan by identifying who they perceive to be the enemy of the general good of the country. Mamdani advises that some among the Asian community need to show a similar kind of possessiveness about Uganda.

### **5.3.3 Asians are conniving with, favoured by the establishment.**

In this subsection, I look at some extracts that fall under the favouritism frame. This segment therefore reflects upon the relationship between Asians and the Ugandan government as portrayed in *New Vision* and *Monitor*, and how this relationship is interpreted by everyday Ugandans. Some of the extracts in this segment are from stories that tackle the issue from a historical viewpoint dating back to the early days of Asian immigration to Uganda, through the era of colonialism, post-colonial years, and today. On the other hand, a number of contributors analyse the riots of 12 April as having roots in the relationship between the establishment and foreign investors in present day Uganda. *Monitor* columnist Munini K. Mulera says:

Museveni's actions and rhetoric over recent years have created resentment towards foreign businessmen, mostly of Asian origin. He has vigorously promoted policies that have favoured foreign business interests, even as he has dismissed and abused the rights and arguments of fellow Ugandans. He appears to care more about the economic and security wellbeing of foreign investors than the welfare and human rights of fellow Ugandans (O, GW, 16.04.07, M).

The writer continues by making a deduction that this relationship between the government and foreign investors is causing a boomerang and says it is no surprise that Ugandans are fighting back:

Unfortunately, some of the frustrated citizens, propelled by the universal problem of raw ethnic and racial prejudice, have reacted with resentment towards Asians, the recipients of the presidents favours (Ibid).

He goes on to illustrate the connection between the government and Asians by saying that leading Asian businessmen have associated themselves with the president and his corrupt regime by financing the president's campaigns for election and re-election in 1996, 2001, and 2006 (Ibid). He further identifies the links between the Asian community and the establishment, mentioning that the treasurer of the ruling NRM party is Asian. He then contends that while all these associations with Asians are not illegal, they may be a pointer to the fact that the lessons of 1972 have been forgotten. He adds that the deep-seated anti-Asian feelings reflected in the euphoria that greeted Idi Amin's expulsion of Asians is still alive today:



[...] the honest citizen is one who condemns the violence but also acknowledges the terrible reality that anti-Asian racism is as alive and well in Uganda as it was 35 years ago. The challenge for the Asians in Uganda, whether citizens or foreigners, is to examine their individual and group behaviour in a country that is steeped in deep economic disparity with the Asians, a tiny minority, sitting at the top of the economic pyramid(Ibid).

A similar analysis of the dynamics of relationships between indigenous Ugandans and Asians, specifically linking Asian tycoons to the political establishment comes from the earlier mentioned Mahmood Mamdani, currently a professor at Columbia University. In his broad analysis of Asian Ugandan relationships, he reveals that as a Ugandan Asian, he was one of those that were sent packing by Idi Amin in 1972, a few months after he had returned to the country. He had been in the USA for his first degree on a US government scholarship.

Mamdani relates that while in the US, having freshly arrived from Uganda where he had tasted the freedom of independence since the country had just freed itself from the shackles of British colonialism, he was eager to join the blacks in the US in their struggle for freedom and justice. So much so that when he returned to Uganda, he felt he was some sort of pan Africanist. "I returned home in early 1972 as a convinced Pan-African nationalist, but was thrown out later in the year as an Asian" (F, GW, 28.04.07, NV).

In the article cited above, entitled "the Asian question Again: A Reflection", Mamdani contends that Asian tycoons and the Ugandan government have been bed-mates right from the time the country got independent in 1962:

Asian businessmen had been able to turn national independence to private advantage. Not only had independence liberated them like everyone else from the limits placed by colonial rule. Asian business tycoons seemed to have developed a comfortable alliance with big bureaucrats and top politicians who gave them political protection (what is today called 'no change') in return for lucrative bribes (Ibid).

Mamdani then argues that this practice of Asian tycoons colluding with government has been slowly but surely spreading its tentacles in the Ugandan society since they started returning in 1986:

Once it (government) faced opposition, the NRM too discovered the advantages of dealing with a business class which had few links within the

country and could easily be isolated and kept on a short leash. Once again, close links began to develop between individual Asian tycoons and prominent politicians in the government, as they had in the Obote period (Ibid).

Meanwhile another writer seems to view the government association and dealings with Asian tycoons as a full scale clandestine strategy to isolate them from Uganda's general population by the policy of divide and rule. Once Asians become an isolated group, they become vulnerable and can thus be milked for all they are worth as government will then act as the only guarantor of their safety (O, GW, 23.04.07, M).

A couple of contributors claim that Asians, disdainfully referred to as *many in that community*, have made no effort to disassociate themselves from this marriage, they have in fact encouraged it, to their own detriment (O, GW, 25.04.07, M). These reiterate the threat that this strategy might backfire:

Perhaps they will start to rue the day they identified too closely with the Museveni regime and did not calculate that it could one day become unpopular and with that unpopularity has come the bitterness they are now facing at the hands of indigenous Ugandans (F, 22.04.07, M).

And finally, the cry that the government seems more interested in foreign investors than what indigenous Ugandans would want as opposition politician Augustine Ruzindana asserts:

The majority shareholders in SCOUT have loudly said that they do not want their forest destroyed, but the management says that it will go ahead and destroy the forest because it is in collusion with the big man among the shareholders (O, GW, 20.04.07, M).

Some feel the regime is convinced that investors are more important than nationals and that it is not making any policy efforts to avoid the exploitation of local workers by foreign investors (O, GW, 27.04.07, M).

Through these extracts, *Monitor* and *New Vision* paint a clear picture of the grievances about the relationship between investors and government and portray the binary of investors versus nationals or local versus foreign.

### 5.3.4 Asians demand recognition

This subsection covers the counter frame to the nationalistic frame addressed in subsection 5.3.1 (Asians are not Ugandans) and 5.3.2 (Asians are taking property of and exploiting Ugandans). In this segment I look at stories where some Asians are seeking to reaffirm and consolidate their place in Uganda.

In one such article, they are contemplating being registered as a tribe <sup>36</sup> in its own right in Uganda's legal framework. The request came as an aftermath of the riot that led to the death of Devang Rawal and the victimisation of Asians. A committee of leaders in the Asian community presented the request while meeting President Yoweri Museveni and other government officials. This frame is important because it gives insight into how Asians feel after the riot and answers the question as to whether they feel threatened and insecure in Uganda. This segment features extracts from a Hard News report on that meeting and from some commentaries that were written in reaction to that request:

In a six-page memorandum, the Indian community demanded recognition as a Ugandan tribe. They also asked the Government to implement the dual citizenship act. [...] The Indians said they had contributed towards the social well-being of the community and asked for more representation in the various arms of government (HN, 19.04.07, NV).

After noting that they had contributed tremendously to Uganda as a whole, the representatives of the Asian business community then take a stand in a statement where they seem to be asserting that they would not be intimidated out of Uganda:

Azim Tharani, who spoke on behalf of the business community, said, "We categorically and unequivocally state that we are here to stay and continue doing our business to assist you and the Government in achieving its vision of industrialising Uganda. We declare our unfettered solidarity and support to you" (Ibid).

The chairman of the Indian association, Naren Mehta, added, "We regard the incident of April 12, as an isolated and unfortunate one, probably pre-planned by anti-social elements to intimidate and cause chaos" (Ibid).

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<sup>36</sup> A tribe can be defined as an aggregate of people united by ties of descent from a common ancestor, community of customs and traditions, adherence to the same leaders etc.  
<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/tribe>. (Accessed 20-01-11) Uganda has over 50 tribal groupings.

As noted in the frame “Asians are conniving with/ favoured by government” in section 5.3.3 some Asian business tycoons seem to have more allegiance to the powers that be than to Uganda as a nation. Some of the statements in the memorandum quoted in this report appear to confirm that assertion. They talk of unwavering support to *you* (the president) and the government, but not to Uganda as a nation they should call home, and not to the people of Uganda as fellow citizens.

Another point to note from these extracts is that there does not seem to be any admittance to the possibility that Asians as a community in Uganda could have done some things that have led to the resentment they face. There are no apologies being offered in response to the numerous accusations in the media that some Asians mistreat their black employees. Instead there is the assertion that they have earned their place in Uganda by their investments.

The final observation from these extracts is that the belief that the riot was an isolated incident could be a refusal to see the reality that seems to be staring Asians in the face. Most of the media reports in April 2007 indicated that there is anger among indigenous Ugandans, which could mean that the violence was not really an out of the blue incident. It stemmed from this anger, and could be repeated as long as the issues that caused that anger are not addressed.

In his reply to the memorandum presented by Asian leaders, the President assures the Asians that their place in Uganda is secure:

[...] Museveni castigated the rioters for the racist sentiments (and) re-assured the Asian community that such incidents will not happen again  
[...]

He warned Ugandans against behaving like the Germans under Adolf Hitler when they persecuted the Jews. “The persecution of the Jews caused the flight of the scientists to the US [...] Germany collapsed and America benefited because of the mistakes of the leaders (Ibid).

The president went as far as to assure the Asians that the business environment would even be made better to enable them invest even more. The audience applauded him when he announced that in the next budget, investment incentives would be re-introduced, including tax holidays and reduction of corporation tax (Ibid).

Following this meeting between the President and the leaders of the Asian community, the general consensus among newspaper columnists was that giving Asians in Uganda tribal

status was not a bad idea. Whereas some, like opposition Politician Betty Kamywa, pointed out that that alone was far from enough in securing the place of Asians in Uganda:

My advice to the Asian community is to see through and resist government tricks to single them out as a special group that needs special attention. It will only earn them animosity from the majority and government will never be able to protect them from this. Lastly, while I support their aspirations to be listed among the tribes of Uganda, Asians will be well advised to support the building of strong institutions in Uganda [...] rather than just support President Yoweri Museveni, the individual (O, GW, 23.04.07, M).

From this commentary and others similar to it, it appears that the requests the Asian leaders presented to the president came across to some indigenous Ugandans as arrogant demands. These columnists seem to interpret these requests to mean that some Asians are refusing to see the gist of the trouble, which is their relationship with the government vis a vis the everyday indigenous Ugandan. In the fight for Mabira forest, the government came across as the real villain since it was the presidency that had reportedly signed the forest away. So, for the Asian leaders to run to the same president for protection could easily be interpreted as a sign that they have chosen the president against indigenous Ugandans who are fighting to ensure that the directive of the president to give away the forest is overturned.

### **5.3.5 Asians masquerading as investors**

Another frame that is fairly recurrent in the media content about Mabira and Asians is the quark investor frame where the accusation is that a number of Asian- born immigrants are only masquerading as investors. Investors in Uganda are understood as people whose business ventures should add value to the country's raw materials while providing employment to indigenous Ugandans. Some Asians are said to be engaging in petty trade, the sort that should otherwise be left to the indigenous Ugandan who does not have as much capital as the foreign investor should. Prof. Mamdani gives a sort of history to the influx of such Asian traders in Uganda:

The number of Asian residents of Uganda began to multiply, from less than 5,000 when the NRM came to power to an estimated 20,000 today. Of these, only 2,000 came from the pre-1972 generation. The largest section was brought in to service big Asian businesses which preferred to hire their core employees from outside (such as India), so it would be easier to keep them on a short leash.

Not surprisingly, the new arrivals were mainly petty traders and semi-skilled employees. The new official terminology that identified just about every person of Asian origin as an 'investor' could not hide this fact (F, GW, 28.04.07, NV).

On his part, Monitor columnist Munini Mulera points out that indigenous Ugandans should direct their anger at the government which has failed to create and enforce laws to protect them from petty foreign traders:

Instead of blaming the regime for failing to protect indigenous retailers from Indian shop keepers posing as investors, they instead blame the semi-illiterate Indian traders who escaped poverty in India and bribed their way to a Ugandan work permit (O, GW, 16.04.07, M).

The sight in Kampala as of 2010 seems to be in line with the accusation through *Monitor* and *New Vision* that many an Asian petty trader has invaded Kampala. This is not a problem in itself since people are free to trade anywhere in the world. It becomes a problem when such ventures are given all the tax rebates and fringe benefits that foreign investors are entitled to in the start-up phase of business. Since these benefits may not be accorded to indigenous Ugandans in equal measure, it then creates a situation of unfair competition.

In all major towns in Uganda today, Asians are to be seen in all sorts of small business ventures such as fast food restaurants and corner shops. This is unlike what one would call an investor who is supposed to help a country get industrialised and create meaningful employment to indigenous Ugandans. To make matters worse, as Mamdani points out, you will often find that the owner of the restaurant is an Asian who has brought in his manager, cashier and supervisor (core employees) from his homeland. Therefore, even the hope that foreign investors would create employment for Ugandans is quashed.

#### **5.3.6 Indigenous Ugandans envious of Asians**

Envy is an important frame since it can be part of the explanation of the anger and resentment of Asians. It is not unusual that envy is expressed as anger, thus envy could well be a big reason behind the violence experienced on 12 April 2007.

The possibility that indigenous Ugandans are envious of the wealth and apparent ingenuity of Asians is not covered in many stories. In fact as far as I have noticed, only one writer touched

upon it in an article entitled “Mabira demo revealed our envy” in *New Vision*. Noting that the riot that led to the victimization of Asians was a disaster waiting to happen, *New Vision* journalist Paul Busharizi points out that the uneasy relationship between the Asians and their African hosts is not unlike the uneasiness between other successful immigrant societies around the world and their host populations:

In Malaysia, there is legislation biased against the immigrant Chinese and in favour of the native Malays. Israel is founded on the frustrations of the Jewish community which thrives wherever it exists and as a result, it has suffered for it. Nearer to home, the Bakiga of Kibaale<sup>37</sup> district can also relate to the Asian predicament.

The anti-Asian sentiment and most other anti-immigrant sentiments around the world is a thinly-veiled envy of their industrious nature. Their entrepreneurial discipline has invariably led them to amass wealth, wealth indigenous Ugandans think it is their God-given right.

Their relative success rankles particularly because these same Asians were dispossessed of all their property in the 1970s, which we took possession of and squandered. They repossessed it and have not only rehabilitated it, but have gone on to replicate it many times over.

The violence meted out on the innocent motor cyclist Devang Rawal who has most likely never occupied the same space as a Mehta, was an outward expression of how inadequate we feel compared to the more successful immigrant. Our feelings of inadequacy are not an excuse for Thursday’s behaviour, but can be the trigger for some deep soul-searching (O, SW, 15.04.07, NV)

The writer then observes that although he does not support the giving away of Mabira forest, only the most undiscerning observer would fail to see that there were very powerful undertones in the riot that had nothing to do with loving trees. He then wonders why indigenous Ugandans do not learn from Asians instead of attacking them:

If we envy the Asians’ wealth, why don’t we learn from them how to create it instead of trying to obliterate them? After all we failed the first time around when we got their properties for free. What makes us think we can do better this time around? (Ibid).

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<sup>37</sup> Bakiga are a tribal grouping found in the south-western part of Uganda

Being an indigenous Ugandan himself, this journalist presents a form of self- reflection on behalf of the “we”. In the same way Idi Amin asked the uncomfortable questions such as why the capital city of Uganda looked like Bombay on a Sunday when the country was supposed to be independent, this reporter asks why some indigenous Ugandans, even when facilitated with the same means as Asians, have not been able to achieve the same prosperity. He touches upon a very sore spot: the possibility that Asians in general might have an inherent ability to make their businesses do better than indigenous Ugandans have. Could it be that the possible realization of this painful prospect is manifesting itself in anger against Asians? Envy is rarely an emotion to be proud of; could that explain why only one story touched upon it in the entire month of April 2007?

### **5.3.7 Exploring post expulsion tensions**

This segment briefly looks at the newspapers’ coverage of the roots of the present day tensions between Asians and indigenous Ugandans. In Chapter one I have attempted to discuss the roots of the tensions between the two groups basing on pre and colonial history. Having done that, I deemed it necessary to analyse how *New Vision* and *Monitor* covered this subject within the context of the Museveni era, or modern history, as that would then complete the discussion on tensions.

This subsection is based on extracts from two articles; one by *New Vision* journalist John Kakande who endeavours to explain the causes of the current tensions between the two groups, and another by aforementioned Prof. Mamdani who attempts to explain the current tensions as well as define what the “Asian question” can be understood as in present day Uganda.

I chose Kakande’s story because it is the only article I found in the entire coverage which attempts to explain modern day tensions between Asians and indigenous Ugandans, presenting a departure from colonial history. Mamdani was chosen because he does the same thing, but also because, being Asian himself, he gives some sort of self-reflection on the status of Asians “from an insiders’ view”. According to Kakande’s story, the decision to return the properties to Asians was not easily arrived upon. In fact, the majority of the executive was apparently opposed to it and it only happened because the president insisted:

A big section of the Ugandan business community and political class were opposed to this. The then interim legislature, the National Resistance



Council<sup>38</sup> (NRC), met in a closed session to debate the issue. The session was chaired by President Museveni himself and according to reports, the debate was quite heated. The NRC begrudgingly agreed to allow the Asians to repossess their properties.

The NRM government's decision was reportedly dictated by the economic realities and by the donor community. For the donor community, it was not easy for Uganda to attract new foreign investors before redressing the gross injustice committed against the Asian community (F, SW, 12.04.07, NV).

The writer furthermore points out that returning the properties to their original owners reignited the old hostilities against Asians because people (indigenous Ugandans) were literally thrown out of buildings and businesses. To make matters worse, some of the returning Asians did not only reclaimed their old properties, they also gradually became prominent in the retail sector. This means that they became rivals with an organisation called Kampala City Traders Association, which is central in mobilising people to demonstrate in the city such as they did in the Mabira demonstration (F, SW, 12.04.07, NV).

Whereas Kakande's report portrays a reluctance to return properties to Asians, it does not explain this reluctance. Mamdani on the other hand provided the reasons against the return of properties in an address to the Uganda Law Society in the mid-80s.

He had expressed reservation against a return of properties and instead suggested that the returning Asians be compensated. His argument was that returning the properties would lead to absentee ownership and or concentration of property in a few hands. In both cases, he argued, it would be socially unhealthy.

At the time Mamdani expressed these sentiments, one could easily have written them off as idle rumblings. In retrospect however, Mamdani's views seem to have had some validity considering the social unrest that Uganda experienced in the riots of April 2007. Mamdani continues his reflections about Asian indigenous Ugandan relations in the same article where he provides a kind of insider soul searching:

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<sup>38</sup> Later become what is currently called National Resistance Movement (NRM) which is the current ruling party in Uganda

In their conscience and sometimes in private conversations, most Asian residents of Uganda realise that these grievances are just. For these aspirations are not confined to Uganda and Ugandans, but are common throughout the formerly colonised countries in Africa and Asia (F, GW, 28.04.07, NV).

In his soul searching, Mamdani notes that not all Asians have the same attitude about Uganda. He stratifies the Asian community:

For ordinary Asian residents, it makes sense to demand that tycoons in the community respect the aspirations of ordinary Ugandans, and to disassociate themselves publicly from those who fail to do so.

Many of this latter group (the category who do not consider Uganda home) are essentially carpetbaggers (in the Asian community, they are known as ‘rockets’ that land and take off at will). Whereas it makes sense for these temporary sojourners to rely on the police for protection, such a strategy would be foolish indeed for those who see Uganda as home.

Mamdani then advises Ugandan Asians to work towards building a future as part of the Ugandan majority as the only way to secure the peaceful co-existence of the two groups. In this advice and in his general insights into the root of modern day tensions between Asians and indigenous Ugandan groups, Mamdani provides the only analytical voice of an Asian in this debate. His thoughts provide a rounding-up of the debate on the source of modern-day tensions between the two groups and a prediction of what may lay ahead. It covers the gap that has generally been missing in the media debate around this issue; how recent history could explain hostilities between Asians and indigenous Ugandans.



## 6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.0 Introduction

The major aim of this research was to explore main newspaper coverage of the relationship between indigenous Ugandans and Asians in the wake of racist attacks on Asians after Mehta, a Ugandan of Indian origin, attempted to acquire part of Mabira forest to expand sugar production. The springboard of this study was the riot that took place on April 12, 2007 in which Indian national Devang Rawal was flogged to death by the rioters, and Asian business premises and worship places vandalized. When I set out to do this research, I wanted to establish the messages this attack and the media debates around the proposed giveaway of Mabira forest could be sending. I also wanted to try and establish the attitudes of indigenous Ugandans towards Asians and vice versa as represented in the chosen media, as well as find out what kind of relationship the two groups seem to have. I hoped that my observations on the above would be a pointer to the future of Asians in Uganda.

The study assumed that the media coverage of the debate on the proposed giveaway of Mabira forest in April 2007 could foretell a possible repeat of an Asian exodus resulting from frictions between Asians and indigenous Ugandans. It was further assumed that the attack on the entire Asian community residing in Uganda (because of the actions of one Asian) were an indication that Asians are a resented people in Uganda.

From these assumptions and background, I developed the following three research questions that guided the investigation:

1. *How do indigenous Ugandans view Asians and vice versa, as portrayed in the media?*
2. *How did New Vision and Monitor portray Asians in the period under study?*
3. *Are there any racial issues raised? If so, how sensitive is the media about these?*

To answer the stated research questions, I used framing and gate keeping as methods of analysing media content. And as such, I studied Hard News and Features, but this analysis

concentrated more on the opinionated genres of Letters, Opinions and editorials in *New Vision* and *Monitor* (since attitudes tend to be more distinct in these genres) published in the month of April 2007. All the media content selected for the study had to do with either Asians or Mabira forest or both.

The theories that guided me include privileged minorities, banal nationalism and journalism, identity construction and marginalisation, all of which in one way or another lead to or manifest in the “us” –“them” dichotomy. The study set out to establish if the media coverage of this issue bears tendencies of banal journalism and nationalism, reveals a form of marginalisation of Asians, portrays Asians as privileged and outsiders, and if the identities (of both Asians and indigenous Ugandans) were being reconstructed as the debate surrounding the proposed giveaway of Mabira forest ensued in *New Vision* and *Monitor*.

## **6.1 Summary of findings and arguments**

### **6.1.1 What the raw anger expressed in Letters says**

In reference to the first research question of this study: *How do indigenous Ugandans view Asians and vice versa as portrayed in the media?*, this study observed that a cross-section of indigenous Ugandans seem to have a negative attitude towards Asians. This was especially evident in the parts of chapter four, where I analysed readers’ Letters carried prior to the riot.

The findings presented in this section indicated that a number of Letters bore a hostile attitude towards the Asian community in Uganda even if it was only one Asian family vying for Mabira forest. In many Letters, writers vented their anger towards the entire Asian community, asserting that Asians were out to grab what otherwise belonged to indigenous Ugandans. This finding is in line with what Eide (2004) termed as cumulative marginalisation in which the actions of one member of a group are assumed to apply to the entire group. This also concurs with my assumption in Chapter 1.2 that the attack on the entire Asian community instead of Mehta as an individual is an indication that Asians are a resented people in Uganda.

Along with the blatant expressions of hatred that many readers’ Letters exhibited, there was a clear drawing of lines between sections of indigenous Ugandans and Asians. Suddenly indigenous Ugandans were distinguishing themselves from Asians; defining themselves as the “us”, (the ones to whom Uganda belongs) and clearly redefining Asians as “them” (the foreigners). From the Letters that I analysed, I observed that only one of the writers stopped

and considered that some Asians could actually be Ugandans; otherwise they were all simply branded as “aliens who should take their vices to their own country.” Such sentiments confirm that a section of indigenous Ugandans (basing on those whose letters were published) detest Asians so much that they can never consider them as fellow Ugandans. It is my contention that this section of Ugandans just needed a trigger to express this hatred; and the trigger came in the form of one Ugandan-Asian asking for part of Mabira forest.

I noted in Chapter 2.6 that identity in a nation is not a static phenomenon; it shifts depending on the social, political and economic conditions prevailing at any one time. I also point out in the introduction of Chapter One that the different peoples living in Uganda tend to generally co-exist without much friction despite their differences. But as scholars such as Moring (2001), Elliot (1986) and Hooper (1994) have observed, this kind of harmony is only maintained as long as no group feels threatened and no borders are crossed. When someone of Asian origin proposed to be given part a forest that is dear in Uganda, I contend that some indigenous Ugandans felt that a border was crossed and a section of them started fighting to reinforce that border. It can be argued that if indigenous Ugandans feel the need to fight for what they think is rightfully theirs to the point of shedding blood, it leaves doubts as to whether they have accepted Asians as part of the Ugandan society.

I have mentioned in Chapter 4.0 that through the analysis of the Letters I set out to gauge the gate keeping role of the selected media houses. Since media workers (like reporters and editors) are gatekeepers, they determine what the population reads and therefore contribute to setting the agenda in society and creating a certain mood among its readers. From this point of view, I contend that by allowing so much anger against a race (Asians) through the gate, they could be said to have practiced a form of banal journalism.

Additionally, the media are said to be watchdogs of society<sup>39</sup>, the one part of society that should not be sleeping but noticing trends in society and reporting about these trends. The fact that both *New Vision* and especially Monitor did not notice that a storm was brewing around Asians as expressed in the angry Letters indicates that they could have been sleeping at a time when they most needed to be awake.

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<sup>39</sup> See <http://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/pnorris/Conference/Conference%20papers/Coronel%20Watchdog.pdf> (accessed 25.03.2011)

Not only did the media fail to notice the storm that was brewing, I propose that they actually were contributing to it by the Letters they published. At a time when Asians were increasingly looking like a vulnerable minority, the media did not pay attention; it was business as usual, thus confirming Prasun Sonwalkar's theory of banal journalism. In this case, *New Vision* and *Monitor* were catering to the needs of the dominant group in Uganda who are the indigenous Ugandans (since it is mostly their voices and opinions being represented) at the expense of the Asian minority.

Going by figures 2, 3 and 4, I observed that *Monitor* gave the Mabira issue more coverage than *New Vision*. I came to this conclusion basing on the number of articles published in the two publications within the period of study. Similarly, *Monitor* carried more aggressive Letters and Opinions targeting the Asian community compared to *New Vision*. The bulk of the Letters that *Monitor* carried were submitted by SMS. This could probably explain why many of them were aggressive towards Asians since SMS Letters tend to be less pondered than mailed Letters.

In the analysis, I attempted to make a distinction between good and bad gate keeping basing on the editorial policies of the two publications. In this context, good gate keeping was taken to mean the gate keeping that adhered to the editorial policy of the publication while bad gate keeping did not. Since *New Vision* generally adhered to its own editorial policy that tends towards censoring content that could lead to aggression against a particular group, I suggest that they were better gatekeepers than *Monitor* that swayed from its editorial policy, a policy similar to the formers.

Having noted that *Monitor* was not vigilantly watching the gate thus letting through Letters that were attacking Asians, it should be remembered that the media is also a mirror of society<sup>40</sup>. They are supposed to reflect what is going on in society. If the Ugandan society at the time was angry and frustrated, isn't it right then that the media portrayed it that way by actually publishing the Letters of anger? And if the Letters had been edited to be more tasteful or left out altogether, wouldn't the media then be presenting a wrong picture of society?

It is also the media's responsibility to provide a platform for debate and expression (Louw, 2005). From this point of view, one can argue that *Monitor* was only playing their role by

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<sup>40</sup> See <http://www.suite101.com/content/can-media-reflect-society-like-a-mirror-a315924> (accessed 25.03.2011)

giving a platform to a section of Ugandans to voice their sentiments about the Mabira issue through the Letters. But from the view that freedom of expression should not go to the extent of abusing the human rights of others (Art. 29 of the 1995 Uganda Constitution) some of this content could be said to tantamount to abuse of the rights of Asians. Therefore, *Monitor* carries the blame for allowing this state of affairs. In modern society, it is expected that media houses perform their traditional roles in a manner that does not incite violence against given sections of society.

On the other hand, my findings from Hard News and Feature stories analysed for the study indicate that these carried much fewer aggressive sentiments compared to Letters and Opinions. This could mean that much as the gate in the Letters section was not watched, the gates for the Hard News and Feature stories seem to have been watched. Reporters could have been carried away by the raging debate about Mabira but very little of the racist rhetoric seeped through into Hard News.

Since most Hard News and Features content (traditionally written by the newspapers' staff) tended to be professional and not give into the tide of resentment against Asians, it could be argued that Sonwalkar's contention that journalists cannot be expected to operate independent of the social-cultural environment in which they exist did not hold here. These reporters to a large degree managed to stay independent of the surrounding circumstances.

### **6.1.2 Observations from Hard News, Opinions and Feature articles**

Unlike Chapter Four where I concentrate on analysing Letters, Chapter Five deals with frames identified in Opinions, Features and Hard News selected from *Monitor* and *New Vision*, with a main emphasis on opinionated articles. The frames that I found to be running through the coverage of this subject in the month of April are; the nationalistic frame, the counter frame, the favouritism frame, the envy frame, and the quark-investor frame.

In reference to research questions two: *How do New Vision and the Monitor portray Asians in Uganda?* And 3: *Are there any racial issues raised, if so how sensitive is the media about these?*, through the analysis of content published in *Monitor* and *New Vision*, I observed that racism against Asians does exist, but it is not open, it is often implied. In the content that I analysed for the study, sentiments of racism were subtle and often veiled in expressions such as *that Indian subcontinent, return to India and enrich their kinsmen*, and a gesture such as a



group of environmentalists asking the leader of the IAU to prevail over *their* member to drop his interest in Mabira.

In most of the content that I analysed, I furthermore observed that racist language also manifested itself in the us-them binary with the “them” often represented in terminology such as *Asians, Indians, foreigners, aliens, their* and *they*. These were often set up against the “us”, represented as *Ugandans, citizens, people of Uganda* and *the rest of the 28 million Ugandans*, among others.

I note that even if Mabira really involved one Asian-owned company, content published in the media made it seem like an issue of the entire Asian community. The discussion in the media tended to focus attention away from Mehta, the root cause of the Mabira saga, to the entire Asian community. In the process, the identity of both Asians and indigenous Ugandans was clearly redefined and reconstructed.

I additionally noted that content in *New Vision* and *Monitor* tended to portray some Asians as encroachers, property grabbers and pretend investors only interested in sucking blood out of Uganda but not in the long term wellbeing of the country and its people. Their association with the establishment is portrayed as just another confirmation that their allegiance is with the government in Uganda and not the every-day Ugandan and her struggle.

Going by the old saying that there is no smoke without fire, I believe the numerous accusations against Asians, some crudely formulated in racist language and others well thought through and argued, must have some amount of truth. It would be unlikely that all the contributors that have expressed these sentiments do not know what they are talking about. It is therefore tempting to conclude that it indeed is in the interest of Asians to listen to these grievances and address them accordingly.

## **6. 2 Boundaries redefined again**

In Chapter 4 I note that whereas the Letters before the riot were hostile to Asians, findings indicated that the tone dramatically changed after the riot. From this development, I argue that Uganda immediately seemed to be a nation in repentance. A form of soul-searching was taking place as apologies were made to the Asian community. For the very first time in the period under study, I noticed that a distinction was made between Asians that are considered foreigners and Ugandans of Asian descent.

This is in line with the theory that the lines separating peoples are not permanent but keep shifting depending on circumstances. Whereas a few days earlier all Asians were bundled under the label of foreigner (or “them”), now some are being accepted as Ugandans and therefore a part of the “us” after society woke up to the racism that had been expressed in the violence.

### **6.3 A privileged Minority**

Despite the fact that a section of indigenous Ugandans expressed remorse at the barbaric attacks on Asians, the usual accusations against them quickly follow on the heels of this remorse. I noted in Chapter 4 and 5 that some readers started questioning the place of Asians in Ugandan society. Many contributors claimed that there was a certain unfair elevation of Asians above indigenous Ugandans because of two reasons: 1) many Asians are wealthier than the average indigenous Ugandan, and 2) because they are wealthy, they control a big percentage of the Ugandan economy which in turn makes them popular with the establishment.

This position reinforces itself in the sense that since some Asians are close to the government, they receive favours at the expense of indigenous Ugandans. These sentiments as expressed in Letters emphasise the notion that Asians are privileged even if they are a minority group. And going by theories on privileged minorities, such groups easily become a target in case the dominant group feels threatened or treated unfairly in comparison to the minority. They become the proverbial “white ducks” among millions of black ones, a position that could catalyse, and for some, justify the expulsion of Asians from Uganda again.

Mamdani sums up this perception of Asians in Uganda thus:

For the middle and the lower-middle classes who have put their energies and assets in secondary and even higher education in the hope of securing their children a white-collar job, it is about the ease with which immigrants [referring to Asians] seem to be able to get residence and work permits at the expense of jobless nationals (F, GW, 28.04.07, NV).

In the same breathe, Mamdani notes that people in urban areas aspiring to join the business sector are infuriated by the crowding of the market place by immigrant traders like Indians and Chinese often called ‘investors’:

For business persons [...] it is about unfair competition and unequal access to officially sanctioned resources and connections. All of them complain of unfair treatment, and all expect preferential treatment for nationals in an independent country. For all of them, this is a question of nationalism, of meaningful independence (Ibid).

Being of Asian descent himself, Mamdani notes that these issues are at the heart of the Mabira question. In essence, he implied that Mabira was just a spark. The grievances against Asians were there and only needed a trigger, which came with Mehta's insistence on acquiring Mabira forest.

Mamdani's sentiments are in agreement with the main media opinion revealed throughout this research; the conviction that a major cause of frictions between Ugandans and Asians are the actions and attitude of the latter towards the former. The general outcry therefore seems to be that if only Asians would improve on these issues, the two groups would then coexist peacefully.

Whereas I sympathise with this sentiment, I strongly believe that indigenous Ugandans share the blame in this thorny relationship with Asians. I argue that in their heart of hearts, a cross section of indigenous Ugandans do despise Asians.

I have seen and witnessed both the mistreatment of indigenous Ugandan employees by their Asians employers, but I have also witnessed the loathe with which the former view Asians. In Asian owned shops and restaurants, I have observed the Asian bosses barking at their employees. The relationship between employer (Asian) and employee (indigenous Ugandans) could be equated to one of a semi-liberated slave and the master. Employees usually wear a tense look and seem to be on alert waiting for the master's next command.

At the same time, these employees manage to have a condescending attitude towards their employers. As an indigenous Ugandan who knows some of the silent social 'codes', I can read and decode these messages. I also encounter this loathing of Asians in one-on-one conversations among indigenous Ugandans.

Typical statements about Asians in such conversations include: *Obuntu obwo bukopi, buwunya, bumpi, bwavu bwa mpisa ate bulogo* (Lunganda, one of the major languages in Uganda). Directly translated; these small men (Asians) are lowly, they stink (of garlic), are short (as opposed to tall and elegant), devoid of manners, and are witches. In such

conversions, it is common to hear that the money one makes from Asians is cursed money. It is said that Asian bosses cast spells on the money before they pay their employees to ensure that the employees do not prosper. My interpretation of this state of affairs is that all that these employees are interested in is whatever little money they can make from Asians, otherwise they view them as not worthy human beings.

I therefore contend that while it is true that Asians need to treat indigenous Ugandans with more dignity, the latter too need to examine their attitudes towards the former in order to foster the peaceful coexistence. Even then, the biggest responsibility seems to lie with Asians who need to address the grievances raised against them. These grievances and the expression of violence against Asians in April 2007 reveal that they are a resented race, and that if not addressed, there could be a repeat of the 1972 scenario.

I further propose that this state of affairs; the tensions between indigenous Ugandans and Asians; can be eased if the media is more watchful when it comes to contentious issues involving the two groups. Additionally, instead of carrying content that only portrays Asians as blood-suckers; I believe it would help the health of Uganda as a nation if the media carried a more nuanced picture of these members of the Ugandan society.

## **6.4 Recommendations**

This study is based on media reports, which may tend to make it shallow in the attempt to establish the feelings and the roots of feelings between Asians and indigenous Ugandans since it lacks direct interaction with these groups. To yield the required result would necessitate personal contact with Asians and indigenous Ugandans.

I therefore suggest that research that employs in-depth interviews with both groups and long term observation is carried out, including their assessment of the role played by various media when it comes to treating the relationship between the groups. I believe this would further detail the root causes of resentment of Asians by some indigenous Ugandans and hopefully foster a more informed debate on the issue.

Furthermore, I found that a lot of research about Asians in Uganda today was mostly about their return. Little has been published about their day-to-day life and interaction with indigenous Ugandans. I suggest that more research should be conducted on the life of Asians since they returned to Uganda. In this thesis I deal with only one month of media coverage

and the focus is the conflict between indigenous Ugandans and Asians. These premises did not allow me to do an in-depth study of the day-to-day life of Asians in Uganda.

I believe such a study would look at the media picture for a longer period, a period devoid of as much conflict as the one this thesis focuses on. Conclusions from this kind of research could give a clearer picture of how Asians are faring in order to be able to predict how their future in Uganda might turn out.

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## Catalogue of Articles

No.	DATE	TITLE	GENRE	SOURCE
<b>THE DAILY MONITOR</b>				
1.0	01.04.07	Cabinet paper on Mabira ready	HN	DM
2.0	01.04.07	Mabira forest: Why must it be given to Mehta?	L	DM
3.0	01.04.07	Mabira forest: Why must it be given to Mehta?	L	DM
4.0	01.04.07	Mabira forest: Why must it be given to Mehta?	L	DM
5.0	01.04.07	Mabira forest: Why must it be given to Mehta?	L	DM
6.0	01.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira forest?	L	DM
7.0	01.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira forest?	L	DM
8.0	01.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira forest?	L	DM
9.0	01.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira forest?	L	DM
10.0	01.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira forest?	L	DM
11.0	01.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira forest?	L	DM
12.0	01.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira forest?	L	DM
13.0	01.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira forest?	L	DM
14.0	01.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira forest?	L	DM
15.0	01.04.07	Should Mabira be given away?	F	DM
16.0	02.04.07	Save Mabira forest mail deluge hits media house	L	DM
17.0	02.04.07	Peoples power in action today	L	DM
18.0	02.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira?	L	DM
18.1	02.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira?	L	DM
18.2	02.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira?	L	DM
18.3	02.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira?	L	DM
18.4	02.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira?	L	DM

18.5	02.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira?	L	DM
18.6	02.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira?	L	DM
18.7	02.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira?	L	DM
18.8	02.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira?	L	DM
18.9	02.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira?	L	DM
18.10	02.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira?	L	DM
19.0	03.04.07	Kabaka land offer not a donation-govt	HN	DM
20.0	04.04.07	Scoul sets terms to abandon Mabira	HN	DM
21.0	04.04.07	Cabinet lying about Mabira Mabira forest	HN	DM
22.0	04.04.07	NRM MPs oppose Mabira giveaway	HN	DM
23.0	04.04.07	Our land; its forests, blood and lost history	O (SW)	DM
24.0	04.04.07	We must find a cure for this greed	L	DM
25.1	04.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira forest?	L	DM
25.2	04.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira forest?	L	DM
25.3	04.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira forest?	L	DM
25.4	04.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira forest?	L	DM
25.5	04.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira forest?	L	DM
25.6	04.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira forest?	L	DM
25.7	04.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira forest?	L	DM
25.8	04.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira forest?	L	DM
25.9	04.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira forest?	L	DM
25.10	04.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira forest?	L	DM
25.11	04.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira forest?	L	DM
26.0	04.04.07	FDC, environmentalists plan demo over Mabira	HN	DM
27.0	04.04.07	Development should not come at the expense of our natural environment	O	DM

28.0	05.04.07	Mabira cutting starts	HN	DM
29.0	08.04.07	Mabira is neither the first nor the last	O	DM
30.0	08.04.07	Mabira: Urgent action is needed	Editorial	DM
31.0	05.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira forest?	L	DM
31.1	05.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira forest?	L	DM
31.2	05.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira forest?	L	DM
31.3	05.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira forest?	L	DM
31.4	05.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira forest?	L	DM
31.5	05.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira forest?	L	DM
31.6	05.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira forest?	L	DM
31.7	05.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira forest?	L	DM
31.8	05.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira forest?	L	DM
31.9	05.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira forest?	L	DM
31.10	05.04.07	What should be done to save Mabira forest?	L	DM
32.0	06.04.07	Mabira giveaway treasonable-activists	HN	DM
33.0	06.04.07	Public votes against the giveaway of Mabira forest	HN	DM
34.0	06.04.07	Use of popular ignorance in the forest debate	O (GW)	DM
35.0	07.04.07	Buganda takes govt to court over Mabira	HN	DM
36.0	08.04.07	Winners and loser in the Mabira saga	O (GW)	DM
37.0	08.04.07	Why must we surrender our destiny to market forces?	O (GW)	DM
38.0	08.04.07	Handling the Mabira opportunity	F	DM
39.0	09.04.07	Mabira the tourist attraction	F	DM
40.0	10.04.07	Mehta faces eviction	HN	DM
41.0	11.04.07	Unsaid things about Mabira	O (GW)	DM
42.0	16.04.07	Mabira forest: Just do the right thing	L	DM



43.0	16.04.07	Facing the facts of Mabira, SCOUL and Museveni	O	DM
44.0	17.04.07	MPs arrested	HN	DM
45.0	11.04.07	What else is secret about SCOUL's bid?	Editorial	DM
46.0	12.04.07	Police okays Mabira Demo	HN	DM
47.0	12.04.07	Mabira: Time for an eco-theology	O (GW)	DM
48.0	13.04.07	Mabira blood	HN	DM
49.0	14.04.07	Army patrols city	HN	DM
50.0	14.04.07	Asians protest victimization, appeal for calm	HN	DM
51.0	14.04.07	Army seals off Mabira	HN	DM
52.0	15.04.07	Indians attack Mehta	HN	DM
53.0	15.04.07	Museveni softens on Mabira	HN	DM
54.0	15.04.07	Racism will affect investment, says UIA boss	HN	DM
55.0	15.04.07	Racism is a sign of backwardness	O (Ed)	DM
56.0	15.04.07	Racist attacks are repugnant	L	DM
57.0	15.04.07	For and against Mabira Forest land give-away	L	DM
58.0	15.04.07	Of gods and Mehta's sugar	O (GW)	DM
59.0	15.04.07	Scoul bosses, there is land aplenty in Bunyoro	O (GW)	DM
60.0	16.04.17	Mabira: Murder charges	HN	DM
61.0	16.04.07	Buganda urges President to listen to people	HN	DM
62.0	16.04.07	Why I decided to give away Mabira	HN	DM
63.0	15.04.07	Forests are answer to global warming, experts say	HN	DM
64.0	15.04.07	We shall not ban demos-Kayihura	F	DM
65.0	16.04.07	Attack on Asians outraged	L	DM
66.0	16.04.07	Lynching is most certainly unAfrican	L	DM
67.0	16.04.07	Factors breeding resentment today	L	DM

68.0	16.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo riot?	L	DM
68.1	16.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo riot?	L	DM
68.2	16.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo riot?	L	DM
68.3	16.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo riot?	L	DM
68.4	16.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo riot?	L	DM
68.5	16.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo riot?	L	DM
68.6	16.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo riot?	L	DM
68.7	16.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo riot?	L	DM
68.8	16.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo riot?	L	DM
68.9	16.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo riot?	L	DM
68.10	16.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo riot?	L	DM
69.0	16.04.07	Letter to my President on vision	O (GW)	DM
70.0	16.04.07	Mabira demo leaders are responsible for chaos	O (GW)	DM
71.0	16.04.07	Asians speak out on Mabira demo attacks	HN	DM
72.0	16.04.07	Now cabinet opposes Mabira give away	HN	DM
73.0	17.04.07	Mabira demo: I narrowly survived death	HN	DM
74.0	17.04.07	Stop favouring Asians, says FDC	HN	DM
75.0	17.04.07	Thursday the 12 <sup>th</sup> asked Uganda's enduring question	O (GW)	DM
76.0	17.04.07	Government must crack the whip on racism, violence	O (GW)	DM
77.0	17.04.07	Australia provides good warning	L	DM
78.0	17.04.07	Mehta, smell the coffee	L	DM
79.0	17.04.07	Getting public ire	L	DM
80.0	17.04.07	Who takes the blame for Save-Mabira demo?	L	DM
80.1	17.04.07	Who takes the blame for Save-Mabira demo?	L	DM
80.2	17.04.07	Who takes the blame for Save-Mabira demo?	L	DM

80.3	17.04.07	Who takes the blame for Save-Mabira demo?	L	DM
80.4	17.04.07	Who takes the blame for Save-Mabira demo?	L	DM
80.5	17.04.07	Who takes the blame for Save-Mabira demo?	L	DM
80.6	17.04.07	Who takes the blame for Save-Mabira demo?	L	DM
80.7	17.04.07	Who takes the blame for Save-Mabira demo?	L	DM
80.8	17.04.07	Who takes the blame for Save-Mabira demo?	L	DM
80.9	17.04.07	Who takes the blame for Save-Mabira demo?	L	DM
80.10	17.04.07	Who takes the blame for Save-Mabira demo?	L	DM
80.11	17.04.07	Who takes the blame for Save-Mabira demo?	L	DM
80.12	17.04.07	Who takes the blame for Save-Mabira demo?	L	DM
81.0	17.04.07	Sweet Crystals turn contentious	F	DM
82.0	18.04.07	Mabira land bonanza: More chaos	HN	DM
83.0	18.04.07	Mabira: Look at the figures first	O (GW)	DM
84.0	18.04.07	Mr President spare Mabira – Maryhill SS	HN	DM
85.0	18.04.07	Demonstrators, police trade accusations	F	DM
86.0	18.04.07	Mabira: Can MPs stop Museveni?	O (SW)	DM
87.0	18.04.07	What about the dead Ugandans?	L	DM
88.0	18.04.07	It is the system we face	L	DM
89.0	18.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo?	L	DM
90.1	18.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo?	L	DM
90.2	18.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo?	L	DM
90.3	18.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo?	L	DM
90.4	18.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo?	L	DM
90.5	18.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo?	L	DM
90.6	18.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo?	L	DM

90.7	18.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo?	L	DM
90.8	18.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo?	L	DM
90.9	18.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo?	L	DM
91.0	19.04.07	How Museveni begged MPs for Mabira forest	L	DM
92.0	19.04.07	Ugandans safe in India	O (GW)	DM
93.0	20.04.07	Does MP Karooro think that Ugandans are fools?	L	DM
94.0	20.04.07	Let's rally behind MPs Atim, Kyanjo	L	DM
95.0	20.04.07	It's not investors	L	DM
96.0	20.04.07	We must learn from our sad past	L	DM
97.0	20.04.07	Mehta, welcome to West Nile	L	DM
97.1	20.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo rioting?	L	DM
97.2	20.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo rioting?	L	DM
97.3	20.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo rioting?	L	DM
97.4	20.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo rioting?	L	DM
97.5	20.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo rioting?	L	DM
97.6	20.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo rioting?	L	DM
97.7	20.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo rioting?	L	DM
97.8	20.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo rioting?	L	DM
97.9	20.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo rioting?	L	DM
97.10	20.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo rioting?	L	DM
98.0	20.04.07	Mabira debate premature, says Museveni	HN	DM
99.0	20.04.07	Minister blasts MPs over Mabira chaos	HN	DM
100.0	20.04.07	What suspicion in power does	O (GW)	DM
101.0	21.04.07	Mabira demo death toll now rises to 5	HN	DM
102.0	21.04.07	SCOUL pipe dream	L	DM

103.0	21.04.07	Grim realities of global warming	L	DM
104.0	21.04.07	Is this all about the Mabira timber?	L	DM
104.1	21.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo rioting?	L	DM
104.2	21.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo rioting?	L	DM
104.3	21.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo rioting?	L	DM
104.4	21.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo rioting?	L	DM
104.5	21.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo rioting?	L	DM
104.6	21.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo rioting?	L	DM
104.7	21.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo rioting?	L	DM
104.8	21.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo rioting?	L	DM
104.9	21.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo rioting?	L	DM
104.10	21.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo rioting?	L	DM
104.11	21.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo rioting?	L	DM
104.12	21.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo rioting?	L	DM
104.12	21.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo rioting?	L	DM
105.0	22.04.07	Cabinet plots to defeat Museveni on Mabira	HN	DM
106.0	22.04.07	Mabira saga!	L	DM
107.0	22.04.07	Mabira Forest: here is a prayer for our country	L	DM
108.1	22.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo rioting?	L	DM
108.2	22.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo rioting?	L	DM
108.3	22.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo rioting?	L	DM
108.4	22.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo rioting?	L	DM
108.5	22.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo rioting?	L	DM
108.6	22.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo rioting?	L	DM
108.7	22.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo rioting?	L	DM

108.8	22.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo rioting? L		DM
108.9	22.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo rioting? L		DM
108.10	22.04.07	Who takes the blame for save-Mabira demo rioting? L		DM
109.0	22.04.07	Mabira riots: Museveni's wakeup call	F	DM
110.0	23.04.07	Advice in the eye of the storm	O (GW)	DM
111.0	23.04.07	Deceptive figures	O (GW)	DM
112.0	23.04.07	Opposing views on investment and civil unrest	O (GW)	DM
113.0	23.04.07	SCOUL appeals for more land offer	HN	DM
114.0	23.04.07	Mehta speaks out on Mabira	HN	DM
115.0	23.04.07	Bataka write to Lukiiko over Mabira forest	HN	DM
116.0	23.04.07	Soroti Police pledges security for Asians	HN	DM
117.0	23.04.07	Sudhir entertains Kacita, Asians at Kabira	HN	DM
118.0	24.04.07	Security screens Asians in Arua	HN	DM
119.0	24.04.07	Mabira: Signs of consumer uprising	F	DM
120.0	24.04.07	Put race prejudice for public debate	L	DM
121.0	24.04.07	Our Asian friends	L	DM
122.0	24.04.07	Mehta is flirting with illegal action	O (SW)	DM
123.0	25.04.07	Buganda petitions Museveni over Mabira	HN	DM
124.0	25.04.07	Mabira demonstration: Organisers tell their prison ordeal	F	DM
125.0	25.04.07	Environmental debate is bigger than Mabira forest	O (GW)	DM
126.0	25.04.07	Fascism: kettle calls pot black	O (GW)	DM
127.0	26.04.07	Mabira: Implications for L.Victoria are grave	O (Ed)	DM
128.0	26.04.07	Democracy worriers must match brains and brawn	O (GW)	DM
129.0	27.04.07	Attack on Asians in Uganda was never racist	O (GW)	DM
130.0	27.04.07	Minister criticises MPs over Mabira	HN	DM

130.1	28.04.07 Mabira is neither the first nor the last	O (SW)	DM
131.0	29.04.07 Mabira forest: Museveni placed between a rock and a hard place	O (SW)	DM
132.0	Development should not come at the expense of our natural environment	F	DM
133.0	16.04.07 Mabira forest: Just do the right thing	O (Ed)	DM
133.1	16.04.07 Facing the facts on Mabira, Scoul and Museveni	O (GW)	DM

## THE NEW VISION

### Opinions

134.0	01.04.07 How I would handle Mabira if I were the President	NV
135.0	03.04.07 Cabinet paper on Mabira forest	NV
136.0	05.04.07 Mutagamba wrong on Mabira	NV
137.0	05.04.07 Let Mabira walk to State House	NV
138.0	05.04.07 Maria, you have glossed over many issues on Mabira	NV
139.0	08.04.07 Soldiers need forests most but Mabira can go	NV
140.0	09.04.07 A natural forest can never be substituted	NV
141.0	09.04.07 In defence of Mehta and Mabira give-away	NV
142.0	13.04.07 Mabira saga widens	NV
143.0	Police vindicated	NV
144.0	Tarnishing our mage	NV
145.0	17.04.07 No amount of money can buy Mabira forest	NV
146.0	29.04.07 Don't return Uganda to Amin era	NV
147.0	29.04.07 All forest reserves must be protected	NV
148.0	19.04.07 What is good for the goose is good for the gander	NV
149.0	20.04.07 Uganda to survive	NV
150.0	04.04.07 Environmentalists need to be patriotic	NV
151.0	17.04.07 Government responds to Mabira demo (GW)	NV

152.0	19.04.07	Why I support Mabira give-away to Mehta		NV
153.0	28.04.07	The Asian Question Again: A reflection		NV
154.0		Set guidelines for demos		NV
155.0	04.04.07	Govt is betraying the NRM revolution		NV
156.1	15.04.07	Mabira Demo revealed our envy	SW	NV
156.2	30.04.07	Asians can mend fences with Ugandans		NV
<b>Hard News</b>				
155.0	01.04.07	Churches oppose Mabira give-away		NV
156.0	02.04.07	Mabira must move – Govt		NV
157.0		Kabaka’s gift to save Mabira		NV
158.0		Cabinet paper on Mabira forest ready		NV
159.0	05.04.07	Mabira: Greens hand petition to Speaker		NV
160.0	08.04.07	Clergy decry Mabira give-away		NV
161.0	04.04.07	Lwanga warns government on Mabira		NV
162.0		Mabira councils oppose give-away		NV
163.0	09.04.07	Mutagamba denies writing report		NV
164.0	10.04.07	Mabira deal is treason		NV
165.0	11.04.07	Mehta accounts secret for 26 years		NV
165.1	12.04.07	Audit Mehta accounts, Treasury Sec		
166.0	11.04.07	Police okays Mabira demo		NV
167.0		Mabira giveaway unsettles locals		NV
168.0	13.04.07	Asians attacked in Mabira demo		NV
169.0	12.04.07	Ugandan-Asian tensions are a century old		NV
170.0	12.04.07	Government, opposition react to anti-Asian violence		NV
171.0	13.04.07	Museveni speaks out on violence		NV



172.0 13.04.07 Demo leaders arrested	NV
173.0 13.04.07 Asians agree to reopen businesses	NV
174.0 13.04.07 Parties condemn racial violence	NV
175.0 13.04.07 Kabaka urges Buganda to remain calm	NV
176.0 13.04.07 Mabira demo shocks Mehta	NV
177.0 13.04.07 Asians still frightened, Kampala remain closed	NV
178.0 13.04.07 Property worth millions lost in strike	NV
179.0 13.04.07 Security tight at Hindu temple	NV
180.0 17.04.07 Mabira issue will damage our image	NV
181.0 Why Mabira must go - Museveni	NV
182.0 15.04.07 Mabira: New Cabinet paper out	NV
183.0 No decision yet	NV
184.0 Give-away violates World Bank deal	NV
185.0 Police arrest Indian killers	NV
186.0 How could they attack a temple?	NV
187.0 14.04.07 From demo to disaster	NV
189.0 Demo leader freed	NV
190.0 17.04.07 Ugandan students in India safe, says ambassador	NV
191.0 17.04.07 Government reassures World Bank on Mabira forest	NV
192.0 Opposition slam police	NV
193.0 17.04.07 Kampala traders' leader released on police bond	NV
194.0 17.04.07 Media helps saboteurs	NV
195.0 17.04.07 Bishops plead to MPs over Mabira	NV
196.0 17.04.07 I warned Anywar	NV
197.0 17.04.07 Parliament slams racial violence	NV

198.0 15.04.07 Bishops slam riot murders	NV
199.0 19.04.07 Cabinet orders new Mabira probe	NV
200.0 19.04.07 Museveni assures Asians	NV
201.0 19.04.07 Mushega blames violence on 3 <sup>rd</sup> term	NV
202.0 19.04.07 Mabira still safe, says Sekandi	NV
203.0 20.04.07 72% of NRM MPs oppose Mabira plan	NV
204.0 Kacita, Indians party	NV
205.0 Asian attacked	NV
206.0 NRM legislators vow to oppose Mabira give-away	NV
207.0 Hundreds visit Mabira forest	NV
208.0 29.04.07 Museveni has no powers on Mabira land	NV
208.1 15.04.07 Mabira demo revealed our envy	NV
209.0 16.04.07 MPs held over Mabira demo	NV
201.0 16.04.07 Mabira demo was premature	NV
202.0 15.04.07 India mourns Mabira victim	NV
<b>Letters</b>	
209.0 01.04.07 Reconsider cutting Mabira	NV
209.1 01.04.07 Reconsider cutting Mabira	NV
210.0 14.04.07 Can Mehta prove his claims about Mabira?	NV
211.0 10.04.07 The issue of Mabira is amazing	NV
212.0 19.04.07 What is democratic governance?	NV
213.0 20.04.07 What crime did the kids commit?	NV
214.0 06.04.07 How can the Mehta Group set terms in Uganda?	NV
215.0 05.04.07 Good leaders listen to public opinion	NV
216.0 23.04.07 Dialogue is needed about Mabira	NV

217.0 09.04.07 Cabinet is making a grave error on Mabira	NV
217.1 09.04.07 Cabinet is making a grave error on Mabira	NV
219.0 24.04.07 Indians should make an effort to integrate in Uganda	NV
220.0 18.04.07 Black Thursday	NV
221.0 03.06.07 Tribe is derogatory and racist term	NV

## Pictures from riots

### Pictures showing police protecting Asians



Police officers guard an Asian man in Kampala during the riots (13.04.07, M)



Police closely watching protestors. Inset is an Asian who was injured when the demo turned violent (13.04.07, NV)

## Pictures showing Asians and their properties being targeted



The Police stopping Mabira demonstrators from carrying away the remains of the burnt Vespa motor cycle that belonged to an Asian, Devang Rawal after he had been killed on Entebbe road in Kampala (13.04.07, NV).



Protestors carrying a placard targeting Asians in Kampala (13.04.07, NV)





Mabira rioters carry a placard written on 'All Indians back to Bombay' during the demonstrations in Kampala (13.04.07, NV)



An Indian who was beaten with his wife, were rescued by the police force

at Clock Tower, Entebbe Road (13.04.07, NV)



Asians hide in their car after being beaten by demonstrators during the riots (13. 04.07, NV)



An Indian man keeping indoors with his son on the day of the riot.

It was reported that many Asians went into hiding while others sought refuge at Police stations when protestors targeted them (13.04.07, NV)

# **The Madhvani Group**

## **History**

In 1912, Muljibhai Madhvani, then aged 18, arrived in Jinja. Due to his extraordinary vision, personality and ability, he was able to take a humble trading concern and create a business that would later account for 10% of Uganda's GDP. As his business prospered, Muljibhai was keen to take care of the well-being and welfare of his employees and the community. His workers and their dependents have enjoyed free education, housing and healthcare, many decades before the term "Corporate Social Responsibility" (CSR), was even devised. The Group's businesses are run primarily by Madhvani family members but many of the newer investments are joint ventures with other businesses.

During the 1970s, the Madhvani family was expelled from Uganda by Idi Amin and their businesses were nationalized and mismanaged to near-extinction. In 1985, the family returned to Uganda and with loans from the World Bank, the East African Development Bank and the Uganda Development Bank, they resurrected and rehabilitated their businesses and started new ones.

## **Subsidiary companies**

The Madhvani Group includes but is not limited to the following companies:

- Chobe Safari Lodge - Murchison Falls National Park, Uganda
- Chrysanthemums Uganda Limited - Nsangi, Mpigi District, Uganda - Joint venture with Flower Direct of the Netherlands
- Coleus Crown Limited - Jinja, Uganda - 50/50 Joint Venture with Coleus Packaging (Pty) Ltd. of South Africa
- Crown Beverages - Kampala, Uganda
- East African Packaging Solutions, Njeru, Uganda - 50/50 Joint Venture with Graphic Systems Limited.
- East African Distributors Limited - Furniture & Hardware Merchandising - Kampala, Uganda
- East African Glass Works Limited (EAGWL), Kampala, Uganda
- Excel Construction Limited - Jinja, Uganda & Juba, Southern Sudan
- East African Underwriters Limited, Kampala, Uganda
- Industrial Security Services Limited - Jinja, Uganda
- Kabuye Sugar Works - Kabuye, Rwanda
- Kajjansi Roses Limited - Kajjansi, Wakiso District, Uganda
- Kakira Airport - Kakira, Uganda: (ICAO: HUKK)
- Kakira Power Company - Kakira, Uganda: The owner-operators of Kakira Power Station
- Kakira Sugar Works - Kakira, Uganda: The flagship company of the Group



- Kakira Sweets & Confectioneries Limited - Kakira, Uganda
- Liberty Life Assurance Uganda Limited - Kampala, Uganda
- Madhvani Group Central Purchasing - Jinja, Uganda
- Madhvani Group Projects Limited - Kampala, Uganda
- Marasa India Resorts and Hotels - Rajkot, Gujarat, India
- Madhvani Properties Limited - Kampala, Uganda
- Madhvani Soap Factory Limited - Kakira, Uganda
- Makepasi Match Limited - Jinja, Uganda
- Marasa Holdings Limited - Kampala, Uganda
- Muljibhai Madhvani & Company Limited - Jinja, Uganda
- Muljibhai Madhvani Foundation - Kakira, Uganda
- Mwera Tea Estate - Mityana District, Uganda
- Mweya Safari Lodge - Queen Elizabeth National Park, Uganda
- Nakigalala Tea Estate - Wakiso District, Uganda
- Nilefos Chemie, Rieme, Belgium
- Nilefos Minerals Limited, Tororo, Uganda
- Paraa Safari Lodge - Murchison Falls National Park, Uganda
- Premier Safaris Limited - Jinja, Uganda
- Rhodia Phosphates Derivatives (STPP), Huelva, Spain
- Software Applications Uganda Limited - Kampala, Uganda
- Steel Corporation of East Africa Limited - Jinja, Uganda
- TPSC Uganda Limited - Aircraft Maintenance - Kakira, Uganda

(Source : [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madhvani\\_Group](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madhvani_Group), accessed 05.05.2011)

## **The Mehta Group**

### **History**

The group owes its foundation to **Nanji Kalidas Mehta** (1887 - 1969). He was born in India in the late 19th Century. In 1900, at the age of 13 years, he migrated to Uganda and started a series of businesses that included a tea plantation, a cotton ginnery, a sugarcane plantation and a sugar factory.

During the 1930s, having established himself in Uganda, Mehta began operations in India. He set up a textile mill and ginning factory in Porbandar, Gujarat, and a trading company in Bombay. Later, a cement plant (Saurashtra Cement Limited) was established in 1956.

In 1972, Idi Amin, then leader of Uganda, expelled all Asians from the country; all of the group's Ugandan possession were surrendered, many to the government-controlled Uganda Development Corporation. The group concentrated on their non-African businesses; setting up a consultancy in India and a plastics plant in Canada becoming a truly international conglomerate during the 1970s. In 1979, Amin was removed from power and the group was invited back into Uganda to repossess their assets.

During the 1980s the Agrima Consultancy wing of the group expanded to Ethiopia, Cameroon, Sudan, Burundi, Nigeria, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Myanmar. The group rehabilitated all their Ugandan businesses during this period. A second cement plant was started in India; the Gujarat Sidhee Cement Limited.

During the 1990s the group entered the financial area by establishing Transafrica Assurance Company Limited. During this period, the cement factories in India were expanded and modernized.

### **Subsidiary companies**

The companies of the Mehta Group include, but are not limited to the following:

- Saurashtra Cement Limited - Ranavav, Gujarat, India
- Gujarat Sidhee Cement Limited - Sidheegram, Gujarat, India
- Agrima Consultants International Limited - Mumbai, India
- Mehta Private Limited - Mumbai, India
- Transafrica Assurance Company Limited - Kampala, Uganda
- Transafrica Commerce Limited - Kampala, Uganda
- Sugar Corporation of Uganda Limited (SCOUL) - Lugazi, Uganda
- Ugma Engineering Corporation Limited - Lugazi, Uganda
- Cable Corporation Limited - Lugazi, Uganda
- Uganda Hortech Limited - Lugazi, Uganda
- Agro Chemical and Food Company Limited - Muhoroni, Kenya

- Mehta Sons (Africa) Limited - Nairobi, Kenya
- Monarch Plastics Inc. - Kenosha, Wisconsin, USA
- Monarch Plastics Limited - Brampton, Ontario, Canada
- Swissplas Limited - Brampton, Ontario, Canada
- Mehta Development Company - London, England, United Kingdom

(Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mehta\\_Group](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mehta_Group), accessed 05.05.2011)